Consumed with Anger

Bougie, J.R.G.

Publication date:
2005

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

ROGER BOUGIE

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ISBN 90-72725891
Cover picture: "*Ik ben boos als de Efteling dicht is*" by Emile Bougie.

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Negative Emotions in Service Consumption Settings

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit van Tilburg,
op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof. dr. F. A. van der Duyn Schouten,
in het openbaar te verdedigen ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties
aangewezen commissie in de aula van de Universiteit

op woensdag 7 december 2005 om 16.15 door

Johan Roger Gisbert Bougie

geboren op 6 september 1968 te Echt.

Promotores

Prof. dr. Rik Pieters

Prof. dr. Marcel Zeelenberg

Promotiecommissie

Prof. dr. Hans Baumgartner, Penn State University (USA)

Prof. dr. Ruud T. Frambach, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Prof. dr. Nico H. Frijda, Universiteit van Amsterdam

Dr. Inge Geyskens, Universiteit van Tilburg

Prof. dr. Rik Pieters, Universiteit van Tilburg

Prof. dr. Ad J. J. M. Vingerhoets, Universiteit van Tilburg

Prof. dr. Marcel Zeelenberg, Universiteit van Tilburg

Acknowledgements

This dissertation is about anger, vengeance, and a number of other negative emotions. Nonetheless, working on it has been a very positive experience. Many people have contributed to this. Before I turn to anger I would like to thank some of them.

First of all, I wish to thank my advisors, Rik Pieters and Marcel Zeelenberg. Rik and Marcel, thank you for everything you have done! Thank you for giving me the wonderful opportunity to write and complete this dissertation; it has changed my life in many ways. Thank you for your thorough and thoughtful guidance along the way; thank you for the many emotional and inspiring discussions; and thank you for your infinite patience, there was much I had to learn.

The marketing department of Tilburg University has been a very pleasant and inspiring working environment. I would like to thank all my colleagues who are (or were) great company during work, research camps, cycling tours, squash games, the 'Hart-van-Brabantloop', and the many other activities we engaged in. Thank you Paul Driessen, Hester van Herk, and Jorna Leenheer for being excellent roommates.

I have combined working on this dissertation with a part-time position as a lecturer and with a full-time "position" as a father. This has been a real challenge. Along the way, I have been very fortunate to have Marie-José as a partner. Thank you for everything princess! Thank you for your understanding, your support, and your love. I have needed it all in large amounts.

It is an honour to have Hans Baumgartner, Ruud Frambach, Nico Frijda, Inge Geyskens, and Ad Vingerhoets in my dissertation committee. Thank you for reading and evaluating this manuscript.

Thank you Pascal Bougie and Rob van Malsen for supporting me as my *paranimf*. Thank you for being best friends for as long as I can remember.

This is a dissertation about emotions. I dedicate it to Emile and Xavier. They constantly remind me that love is the most powerful and beautiful emotion of them all.

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On Customer Anger

One day, when I should have been working on this dissertation, I was watching MTV. I saw two men, who were having a meeting in an office, and a small clock ticking in the bottom left corner of the screen. One of the men appeared to be an accountant; the other man was one of his clients. They were arguing. It seemed that the accountant, who was making a rather sloppy impression, had misplaced a comma on the income tax form of his client. Because of that, the client had to pay a surplus of $ 5,000 to the IRS. Obviously, the customer was unhappy. The accountant explained that there was nothing that could be done, other than paying the extra $ 5,000. After arguing about the accountant's blunder for a while, and disagreeing about who had to pay the $ 5,000, the customer suddenly yelled that there was no (and at this point there was a short bleep) way that he was going to pay the $ 5,000. At that moment, the television screen turned red and the words 'Boiling Point' appeared. I was watching an episode of MTV's *Boiling Points.*

Boiling Points is a show in which people in anger-provoking situations are filmed by hidden cameras. Actors are dressed up (for instance as accountants, as employees of delicatessens, or as bicycle couriers), anger-provoking situations are created, cameras are hidden, and a clock is set. If the unsuspecting targets can keep their cool for a designated time, they win cash. If they lose it, they also lose their chance at $ 100 (www.mtv.com).

The average episode of Boiling Points suggests that most people lose it. They become either verbally or physically aggressive, leave the situation, or threaten to call the police: in one way or another, "they hit their boiling point early". In this way the show illustrates that anger is a powerful negative emotion, that may inspire vigorous and aggressive impulses and behaviors in response to failed service encounters.

This dissertation investigates various aspects of customer anger in services. It focuses on anger because this is a powerful emotion with profound negative effects on the angry customer, the service provider, and the relationship between the angry customer and the

service provider. Indeed, recent research in marketing has shown that customer anger may prompt negative behavioral responses to failed service encounters such as customer switching and negative word-of-mouth communication (Nyer, 1997a; Taylor, 1994). Since anger is also a common emotion (Averill, 1982), it may have strong implications for the performance and profitability of service firms.

Emotion theorists differentiate a large number of negative emotions, such as anger, dislike, disgust, dissatisfaction, fear, sadness, guilt, shame, regret, and disappointment. Appraisal literature (e.g., Smith and Ellsworth, 1985) finds that these specific emotions are associated with specific patterns of cognitive appraisals of the emotion-eliciting event. Additionally, it is proposed and demonstrated that these emotions can be differentiated in terms of their experiential content, that is, what it means to be (for instance) angry, ashamed, disappointed, or sad (Roseman, Wiest, and Swartz, 1994). Finally, it is recently shown that specific emotions have specific effects on behavior; even closely related negative emotions such as regret and disappointment were found to have distinctive effects on behavioral responses to failed service encounters (e.g., Zeelenberg and Pieters, 1999, 2004). These findings show that it is useful to focus on specific emotions in order to understand, explain, and predict consumer behavior. In other words, the findings demonstrate that the more traditional approach in marketing research and practice, that is, to focus on broad, general paradigms such as 'service failures', or broad, general constructs to measure the negative evaluation of a service (such as customer dissatisfaction or overall negative affect) might fall short when the goal is to predict customers' behavioral responses to failed service encounters or to explain customers' preferences for service recovery. For this reason, this dissertation focuses on one specific negative emotion, instead of on negative emotions or negative affect in general.

What is Anger?

The term 'anger' has a multiplicity of meanings and connotations in everyday language. For instance, among other things, anger can refer to feelings, bodily reactions, behavior associated with it, or attitudes. What's more, whereas some people perceive anger as a negative force that should be eradicated completely, others see it as a positive, constructive emotion that can

help to correct a perceived wrongdoing or to restore social justice. The following (brief) examination of the metaphors and metonyms used for anger, the (popular) literature, and the Internet, exemplifies the wide variety of viewpoints on anger.

Kövecses (1990), who investigated emotion concepts used by English-speaking people, presumes that "the conventionalized language we use to talk about the emotions can be an important tool in discovering the structure and contents of our emotion concepts and that (...) the emotion concepts we have can reveal a great deal about our experiences of emotion" (p. 3). He further assumes that people carry around in their heads "certain prototypical cognitive models associated with particular emotions" (1990, p. 4). Kövecses assembled as many of the everyday expressions for anger as he could find. Based on this, he determined that the model of anger contained in the metaphors and metonyms people use to talk about anger in English relates to physiological features of *body heat* as in the expressions, "Don't get hot under the collar", "She is a hothead", and "They were having a heated argument", *internal pressure* ("I felt as if I would explode"), *redness in the face and neck* ("He got red with anger"), *agitation* ("She was shaking with anger"), and *interference with accurate perception* ("She was blind with rage"). What's more, anger is *heat* ("You make my blood boil" and "He was consumed by his anger"); it produces *pressure* ("He was bursting with anger") and *steam* ("She is just blowing off steam"); and when it becomes too intense anger *makes people explode*. Finally, anger is experienced as *insanity* ("You are driving me nuts"), a *dangerous animal* ("She has a ferocious temper"), as an *opponent* ("He was battling his anger" and "Anger took control of him"), and as a *burden* ("Get it of your chest"). Kövecses (1990) asserts that the aforementioned metaphors are central to anger and that they shape people's experience of this emotion. For instance, he claims that to the extent people think of anger as a dangerous animal or an opponent against which they must struggle, they will attempt to avoid getting angry.

The concepts of anger contained in the latter metaphors ("insanity", "a dangerous animal", "an opponent", and "a burden") show that anger is sometimes perceived as a negative emotion, not only in terms of subjective experience, but also in terms of social judgment. Seneca (4 B.C.-A.D. 65), for instance, who wrote the first complete work specifically devoted to the topic of anger (De Ira) saw absolutely no value in this emotion. Seneca, who saw emotions as diseases of the mind regarded anger as "the most hideous and frenzied of all emotions" (trans. 1963, p. 107). Evagrius Ponticus, a fourth-century Egyptian

monk, was also quite negative about this emotion. He defined anger as one of eight deadly sins. More precisely, Ponticus defined eight vices that may give rise to sinful impulses and behavior. The current heptad – pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth – was formulated by Gregory the Great in the sixth century. Both Evagrius Ponticus and Gregory the Great depict anger as "deadly" in the sense that it is destructive to the immortal soul: angry people condemn themselves to hellish states of existence. From this perspective anger is a sin of the devil

> (...), and one of immense importance and fiery power. (...) The consequence of this inflaming and indwelling passion is to feel vengeance in one's heart. This sin escalates to rage, obliterating all but negativity within body, mind and soul and results in murder and war. Often seen in icons, anger is a creature stabbing himself in the heart with a knife.
>
> (http://www.vampyra.com)

The message is clear: anger presents a danger to others and to the self, and should therefore be suppressed and/or avoided.

This rather pessimistic representation of anger is in contrast to the (informed) views of others, such as for instance Aristotle or Averill, who emphasize the positive aspects of anger. Both Aristotle and Averill conceptualize anger as a constructive emotion that requires complex thought processes and moral judgments. For both Aristotle and Averill, anger is a highly sophisticated, socially constituted, emotional syndrome that serves to regulate human interpersonal behavior (Aristotle, trans. 1941; Averill, 1982; 1983).

Indisputably, this brief overview shows that people's viewpoints on anger vary extensively. Whereas some people take (or have taken) a rather pessimistic stance, others are much more positive about this emotion. This dissertation aims to maintain a balanced perspective, that is, to understand anger in both its positive and negative aspects.

Towards a Definition of Anger

Merriam-Webster's dictionary (2004) describes anger as "a strong feeling of displeasure and usually of antagonism," and the Oxford Dictionary (2003) describes anger as "a strong feeling

of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility." Hence, the typical dictionary definition of anger aptly relates anger to a number of strong negative feelings. However, anger is more than that, as delineated by the following review of how emotion researchers look at the concept.

Emotion researchers taking a *prototypic viewpoint* of anger argue that people's reports and interpretations of their emotional experiences are generally based on widely shared mental representations of emotions (Russel and Fehr, 1994; Shaver et al., 1987). They point out that an abstract image, representing the best, most representative example of an emotion, or a prototype is formed as a result of experience, cultural learning, or both. When people encounter emotional episodes, they organize their interpretations in terms of this prototypical emotional experience. Experiences are then categorized in terms of their resemblance to the prototype. Hence, there can be "varieties of anger" graded in terms of how good an experience is an example of a prototypical experience of anger. For researchers in the prototype tradition, to know the concept of anger is "to know a script (...) in which prototypical antecedents, feelings, expressions, behaviors, physiological changes and consequences are laid out in causal and temporal sequence" (Russel and Fehr, 1994, p. 202). Accordingly, the anger prototype includes appraisals, such as for instance appraisals that an event is illegitimate, unfair, and contrary to what it ought to be; feelings, such as for instance feelings of nervous tension, anxiety, and discomfort; aggression-related physical activities, such as fist clenching and threatening movements or gestures; and physiological changes, such as stomping and tight, rigid movements.

Appraisal-based views of anger regard this emotion as arising from the meaning given to perceived occurrences. Appraisal theory is a theory about the causes of emotions. It assumes that the emotion people will feel is determined by the way they judge or appraise an event. Appraisal-based views on anger basically contend that anger exists only when occurrences are understood or appraised in a particular matter. They typically maintain that an anger-provoking event has to be seen as an offense or mistreatment. For instance, Solomon (1993) took this approach when he maintained that, "if there is nothing objectionable, frustrating, or offensive (to the person), then those feelings do not count as (...) anger" (p. 11). Appraisal theory states that anger is provoked when a negative event is attributed to a "freely acting" external agent (Frijda, 1986). Like this, blame is also considered to be a crucial aspect of the instigation of anger (e.g., Averill, 1982; Lazarus, 1991). For instance, Lazarus (1991) contends that anger depends on "a personal slight or demeaning offense" (p. 223) and that

without this special meaning the negative event could equally well produce other negative emotions, such as for instance anxiety and sadness. Along these lines, Lazarus finds that a "demeaning offense against me and mine is the best shorthand description of the provocation to adult human anger" (p. 222).

Berkowitz (1990), who developed a specific theory of anger, does not believe that appraisals, or any other cognitive processes, are necessary for this emotion. He proposes that all aversive events can cause some feelings of anger. For Berkowitz, anger is an irrational reaction that occurs in response to unpleasant feelings; he maintains that complex thinking influences anger only after primitive anger has already been aroused. His *cognitive neoassociationistic (CNA) theory of anger* integrates several theories that posit more specific causes of anger, such as frustration and pain. His CNA model suggests that the initial reaction to a negative event is negative affect. This unpleasant feeling then automatically generates at least two emotional syndromes consisting of expressive-motor and physiological reactions, feelings, thoughts, and memories. One of these syndromes is associated with aggression-related tendencies, the other syndrome is associated with escape-related tendencies. The anger experience grows out of the aggression-related tendencies of which the (relative) strength is determined by genetic, learned, and situational factors (Berkowitz, 1990, 1993).

Berkowitz' ideas are in contrast with the approach of Averill (1982, 1983), who has devoted considerable attention to the social construction of anger. For Averill, emotions are syndromes, or sets of events that occur together in a systematic manner. That is, emotions have a variety of components, including subjective experiences, expressive reactions, patterns of physiological response, and coping reactions, that tend to occur together. No subset of these components is a necessary or sufficient condition for an emotion. What's more, for Averill emotions have important social functions. According to Averill (1982, p. 317), anger is:

> a conflictive emotion that, on the biological level, is related to aggressive systems and, even more important to the capacities for cooperative social living, symbolization, and reflective self-awareness; that, on the psychological level, is aimed at the correction of some appraised wrong; and that, on the sociocultural level, functions to uphold accepted standards of conduct.

Averill finds that anger leads people to work out the problems that have arisen in relationships. The way anger is acted out is determined by socially determined rules associated with particular emotional roles. Moreover, all the components of anger, the appraisals, the experience, and behavior, must be seen for the ways in which they contribute to the individual as well as the social level; in the long run, the correction of appraised wrongs should help to regulate interpersonal relationships by encouraging the target of anger to conform to socially accepted standards of conduct.

Averill's definition of anger is comprehensive and it puts anger in a context of social relationships, which are both useful characteristics for the purposes of this dissertation. For this reason, Averill's definition of anger serves as a guiding definition throughout this dissertation.

Functionality of Anger

Emotions serve several functions. In their social-functional approach to emotions, Keltner and Haidt (1999) distinguish functions at four different levels: the individual, dyadic, group, and cultural level. At the *individual level*, emotions are proposed to serve two broad social functions. First, emotions may inform people about the nature and urgency of social events. Along these lines, theorists have proposed that anger provides an assessment of the fairness of events, whereas love, for instance, informs the individual of the level of commitment to another person (e.g., Solomon, 1990; Frank, 1988). Second, it has been argued that emotions prepare people to respond to problems or opportunities that arise in social interactions (Frijda, 1986; Izard, 1977; Schwarz and Clore, 1988). In this way, the function of anger is to provide people with the motivation and the means to remove whatever it is that is restraining them. For Izard (1977, p. 333), for instance, the value of anger "lay in its ability to mobilize one's energy and make one capable of defending oneself with great vigor and strength."

At a *dyadic level*, emotions are believed to organize social interactions by providing important information to others (Keltner and Haidt, 1999; Oatley and Jenkins, 1996). For instance, emotional expressions inform others about the sender's current feelings, beliefs, social intentions, and orientation towards a relationship (e.g., Ekman, 1993; Fridlund, 1992). Another function of emotions on a dyadic level is that they, through emotional expressions,

may evoke reciprocal or complementary emotions in others that may help them to respond to social events. Finally, at a dyadic level, emotions have been argued to serve as incentives or deterrents for other people's behavior. Along these lines, Aristotle (trans. 1941) has emphasized that suppressed anger can have little effect. Indeed, he claims that we do not even become angry "if we think that the offender will not see that he is punished on our account and because of the way he has treated us" (p. 55). Evidently, for Aristotle (the threat of) reciprocity or 'tit-for-tat' serves a function in social regulation in situations of continued or continuous social interaction.

At a *group level*, emotions are assumed to help individuals to define group boundaries and identify group members (Keltner and Haidt, 1999). Additionally, the experience and expression of emotions may help group members to define and negotiate their respective roles and statuses within a group. Consistent with this notion, emotion research has revealed associations between status and the expression of anger. Specifically, it is shown that in the majority of cases, anger is aroused by actions of people of low(er) status (e.g., Harris, 1974).

In conclusion, at a *cultural level*, emotions are assumed to play a role in perpetuating cultural ideologies and norms and values. Several authors have argued that because the typical instigation of anger involves the violation of social norms, every episode of anger involves a moral judgment. In this way, anger is eventually assumed to help to maintain particular systems of values (Armon Jones, 1986; Averill, 1982).

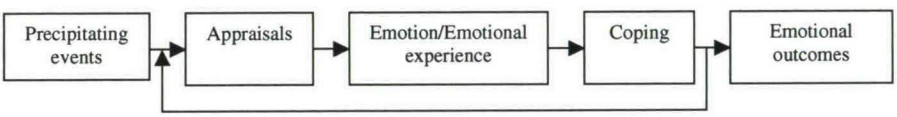
The dissertation mainly focuses on the individual and dyadic level of analysis. For instance, Chapter 2 focuses on how angry customers want service providers to deal with their emotions. Hence, at a dyadic level of analysis, the results of Chapter 2 help service providers to respond to anger-provoking service encounters. In contrast, Chapter 3 focuses on the individual level of analysis by relating the experience of anger to behavioral responses of angry consumers.

The Process of Anger

For emotion researchers the study of emotions is above all the study of change; that is, emotions are typically viewed as ongoing, dynamic experiences that change over time. Emotions involve ongoing activities, in which people constantly monitor and appraise the state of their world in an effort to detect changes in the status of personally significant goals

(e.g., Lazarus, 1991; Stein and Levine, 1987, 1990). Consequently, a continuous stream of new information is provided and appraised. If a goal is blocked, attained, or threatened, a specific emotion with a specific subjective experience is triggered. In turn, emotional experience is the proximal cause of all that follows, including specific adaptive behavior or coping (Arnold, 1960; Lazarus, 1991; Plutchik, 1980; Roseman et al., 1994). Emotional outcomes are based on the results of this continuous process of appraisal and re-appraisal, emotional reactions, and coping strategies. Figure 1.1 provides a schematization of this emotion process.

Figure 1.1 *The Emotion Process*



The remainder of this section will focus on different aspects of this emotion process and pay specific attention to anger. It starts with a discussion of research findings regarding precipitating events. Next, appraisals associated with anger are discussed. After a brief discussion of research findings on how people may cope with anger, this section concludes with the emotional outcomes of this emotion.

Precipitating Events

"We may love another for himself, but we cannot be angry at another simply for himself" (Averill, 1983, p. 169). Anger requires a target, for instance an accountant, but also an instigation or precipitating event, for instance a carelessly placed comma on a tax return form.

Several researchers have classified precipitating events of anger in everyday life (Anastasi, Cohen, and Spatz, 1948; Gates, 1926; McKellar, 1949; Meltzer, 1933; Richardson, 1918). In each of these studies, participants were either asked to keep daily records of their anger, or to provide descriptions of recent critical incidents. Precipitating events were then classified into mutually exclusive categories by the researchers.

Richardson (1918) divides precipitating events into two broad categories: irritation and negative self-feelings. Others treat instigations of anger as the result of frustration or the thwarting of our goals; according to both Gates (1926) and Meltzer (1933), most of the

instigations of anger involve the frustration of self-assertive activities, such as for instance threats to self-esteem and refusals of a request (respectively 63% and 86% of the total number of instigations of anger). Anastasi, Cohen, and Spatz (1948) provide yet another classification. An attempt to stay as closely as possible to the participants' own reports resulted in five categories: thwarted plans, inferiority or loss of prestige, schoolwork, family relations, and abstract problem such as seeing a classmate cheat or witnessing intolerance toward others. Finally, McKellar (1949) distinguishes between need situations and personality situations in the instigation of anger. Need situations included a goal, such as missing a bus. Personality situations included the encroachment of personal values, status, and possessions, or the imposition of pain.

Most probably as a result of the "cognitive revolution" in psychology, that is, the emergence of the cognitive appraisal approach to emotion in the mid-1960s, scant research has dealt with precipitating events of anger for almost fifty years; from the mid-1960s on, appraisals are used to explain why people get angry. However, as Stein, Trabasso, and Liwag (2000, p. 441) note:

> Identifying the precipitating event that precedes an emotion is critical to understanding emotional experience. Precipitating events are used as markers to signal what initiated the changes of valued goals. The precipitating event is often cited as the reason for an emotional response, without including any mention of the changes that have been perceived with respect to the status of important goals.

In this way, they underline the value of research on precipitating events of anger.

Stein et al. (2000) divide precipitating events of anger that children identified into four prototypic event categories: child's goals are in conflict with another's, child's possession are taken away/destroyed, child is forced to do something, child is intruded upon. They found that these events were excellent indicators of the appraisals that children made and of the emotions they experienced. Thus, Stein et al. relate precipitating events to specific appraisals and emotions.

Appraisals

Appraisal theory is a theory about the elicitation or causation of emotion. It assumes that it is the way that people judge or appraise an event rather than the event itself that determines the

emotion people will feel. The roots of this theory go back as far as Aristotle, but the modern approach is inspired by the work of Arnold (1960). For Arnold, at the heart of every emotion, there is this special kind of judgment called appraisal, "a direct, immediate sense judgment of weal or woe" (p. 175).

An appraisal of an event is more than the simple perception of it. What distinguishes mere perception from appraisal is that the latter involves a judgment of how the event relates to one's goals and concerns:

> To perceive or apprehend something means that I know what it is like as a thing, apart from any effect on me. To like it or dislike it means that I know it not only objectively, as it is apart from me, but also that I estimate its relation to me, that I appraise it as desirable or undesirable, valuable or harmful for me, so that I am drawn toward it or repelled by it. To arouse an emotion, the object must be appraised as affecting me in some way, affecting me personally as an individual with my particular experience and my particular aims.
>
> (Arnold, 1960, p. 171)

Appraisal theory maintains that while people may differ in the specific appraisals that are elicited by a particular event, the same patterns of appraisals give rise to the same emotions. For instance, because people's goals and motivations may differ, missing a bus may prompt rage in some, whereas it may produce mild annoyance, frustration, disappointment, sadness, or even no emotions at all in others.

There is considerable agreement in the emotion literature as to what kinds of appraisals are associated with anger (Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones, 2004). Goal blocking or *goal frustration* is generally accepted as an important determinant of anger; people will become angry if they are kept from reaching their goals (Averill, 1982; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985; Smith and Lazarus, 1993). There is also strong agreement that an *external agent* must be seen as responsible for the negative event if there is to be anger (Lazarus, 1991; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985). What's more, it is proposed that anger rises when a negative event is attributed to a "freely acting" external agent (Frijda, 1986, pp. 198-199). Like this, *blame* is also considered to be a crucial aspect of the instigation of anger (Averill, 1982; Lazarus, 1991). The relation of *unfairness* and anger has also been documented in various studies (Elssworth and Smith, 1988; Weiss, Suckow, and Cropanzona, 1999). For instance, Weiss et

al. (1999), experimentally manipulated the unfairness of outcomes received by their participants and showed that the wrongdoing produced an angry reaction. Other appraisals that have been associated with anger are *stability, high goal relevance, goal incongruence,* and *high coping potential* (Lazarus, 1991; Roseman, 1984; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985).

Recent research suggests that, although they are clearly associated to anger, none of the afore-mentioned appraisals is a necessary or sufficient condition for anger to arise (Kuppens et al., 2003; Smith and Ellsworth, 1987). That is, customers can experience anger without experiencing a situation as, for instance, unfair. Consequently, assertions about the relation between anger and appraisals "need to be specified in terms of contingent relations between both, meaning that they usually co-occur, instead of in terms of necessity or sufficiency" (Kuppens et al., 2003, p. 266).

Coping with Anger

Most emotion researchers believe that when people are angered, they feel the innate tendency to respond with aggression (e.g, Averill, 1982, 1983; Berkowitz, 1990). However, whereas action tendencies are often "automatic, nondeliberate, and primitive" (Lazarus, 1991, p. 114), coping is a more complex, deliberate, and planful psychological process that relies at least in some part on judgments on what actions are likely to be effective in a given situation (Lazarus, 1991). For that reason, aggressive action tendencies are often suppressed and converted into more constructive behavior, such as talking the incident over with the target of anger or with some other person (Averill, 1982, 1983). Indeed, angry people may deal with their emotions in a wide variety of ways.

An overview of the literature that has aimed to identify, understand, categorize, and measure anger response styles shows the diversity of specific ways for dealing with anger. A well-known distinction is that between *anger-out*, the tendency to overtly express anger; *anger-in*, the tendency to suppress the overt expression of anger; and *anger-control*, the tendency to engage in calming activities (Spielberger et al., 1985). This distinction has recently been extended by Deffenbacher et al. (1996), who have proposed nine forms of anger-coping (anger-in, anger-control, noisy arguing, verbal assault, physical assault–people, physical assault–objects, reciprocal communication, time out, and direct expression) and Linden et al. (2003) who have proposed six forms of coping: direct anger-out, assertion, support-seeking, diffusion, avoidance, and rumination.

Consequences of Anger

The consequences of anger relate to what happens to the angry person and/or others, such as the target of anger, as a result of how the angry person deals with anger. Recent research has found that more aggressive forms of anger expressions increase the chance of negative consequences, such as a negative mood, negative self-feelings, physical and verbal fights, property damage, and/or legal difficulties. Less aggressive forms of anger expression reduce the chance of experiencing negative consequences (Deffenbacher et al., 1996).

Interestingly, it is found that the consequences of most episodes of anger are evaluated positively, both by the angry person and by the target (Averill, 1982). These positive evaluations may be due to some change of behavior or attitude of the target, to an increase in mutual understanding, and to an improvement of the relationship between the angry person and the target of anger (Averill, 1983). On the basis of these findings Averill contends that from a functional viewpoint, anger may be considered as a positive emotion.

Theoretical Relevance

The previous section shows that anger is thoroughly studied in psychology. In contrast, research on *customer anger* is in short supply. As the following brief overview will demonstrate, a comprehensive and systematic framework of customer anger is missing. Previous research in marketing has predominantly focused on either the antecedents or the consequences of anger.

A first stream of research has focused on the antecedents of customer anger (e.g., Folkes et al., 1987; Nyer, 1997a; Ruth, Brunel, and Otnes, 2002; Taylor, 1994). This literature uses attribution or appraisal theory to understand why anger is experienced in service settings. For instance, Ruth et al. (2002) characterize and differentiate consumption emotions from each other on the basis of their associations with distinct patterns of appraisals. They demonstrate that anger is associated with an event that is appraised as unpleasant and as highly unfair with an obstacle to overcome, for which someone else is responsible. Others show that anger rises when the cause of the service failure is stable. Finally, anger is associated with appraisals of high goal relevance, goal incongruence, and high coping potential (Folkes, Koletsky, and Graham, 1987; Nyer, 1997a; Taylor, 1994). These findings converge with basic emotion

research findings on the appraisals associated with anger (e.g., Smith and Ellsworth, 1987; Roseman, Antoniou, and Jose, 1996).

A second stream of research has focused on the behavioral consequences of customer anger (Casado-Díaz and Mas-Ruíz, 2002; Dubé and Maute, 1996; Folkes et al., 1987; Nyer, 1997a). In two separate field studies, both Casado-Díaz and Mas-Ruíz (2002) and Folkes et al. (1987) show that anger is positively related to the propensity to complain and negatively related to repurchase intentions. Dubé and Maute (1996) and Nyer (1997a) use experimental designs to show that anger is a predictor of intentions to engage negative WOM.

When the afore-mentioned findings on anger in marketing settings are placed in Figure 1.1 it becomes clear that important research areas have not been covered by research in marketing. More specifically, research on precipitating events of customer anger, on how angry customers may cope with their emotions, and on how angry customers want service providers to deal with their anger is lacking. Hence, the theoretical contribution of this dissertation on customer anger stems from filling up these gaps in research on customer anger in services. Apart from these considerations, practical considerations have also formed a key motivation for this dissertation. The next section will discuss the practical relevance of this dissertation.

Practical Relevance

This dissertation aims to supply service providers with knowledge to prevent anger and to adequately deal with customers experiencing anger, both on a strategic and operational level. On a strategic level, this dissertation will support service firms with respect to decision-making and services marketing management. On an operational level, it will first and foremost offer service providers information for avoiding customer anger and dealing with angry customers.

The relevance of this topic for service marketers is emphasized by research findings showing that customer anger prompts negative responses to failed service encounters (Nyer, 1997a; Taylor, 1994). These responses directly or indirectly affect the profitability of service firms, because angry customers may switch service providers, engage in negative word-of-mouth communication, or harm the service firm differently (see also Chapter 3 and 4). Since anger is also a common emotion in response to failed service encounters, as shown by the

following descriptive study, it may have strong implications for the performance and profitability of service firms.

Descriptive Study on the Prevalence of Anger in Services

Customers may experience a wide range of emotions in response to a service encounter. Previous research has mentioned joy, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, disappointment, anger, contempt, fear, shame, regret, and sadness, to name only a few (Nyer, 1997a; Westbrook, 1987; Zeelenberg and Pieters, 1999; 2004). One of these emotions, that is anger, has profound effects on customers' behavioral responses to failed service encounters, such as switching and negative word-of-mouth communication (Nyer, 1997a; Taylor, 1994). In turn, switching and negative word-of-mouth communication directly or indirectly affect the profitability of service firms. Hence, the basic emotion research finding that anger is also a common emotion that is experienced by most of us anywhere from several times a day to several times a week (Averill, 1982; see also page 2, this dissertation) suggests that anger may have a strong impact on the profitability and performance of service firms.

However, the afore-mentioned findings on the prevalence of anger do not necessarily apply to service consumption settings. For instance, Averill shows that the most common target of anger is a loved one or a friend: "anger at others, such as strangers and those whom we dislike is not usual" (1982, p. 169). Averill provides a number of possible reasons for this finding, such as increased chances that a provocation will occur, a stronger motivation to get loved ones to change their ways, the more cumulative and distressing nature of provocations committed by loved ones, the tendency to give strangers the benefit of the doubt, and the tendency to avoid those who we dislike. It is therefore unclear whether anger is frequently experienced in service settings. This opening study aims to fill this gap in our knowledge by investigating whether anger is commonly experienced in response to failed service encounters. The results of this study provide increased insights into the prevalence of anger in services and thus into the effects of customer anger on the profitability and performance of service firms.

Method

Procedure. The critical incident technique (CIT) was used as a method. Flanagan (1954) defines the CIT as 'a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles'. This CIT is well established in different subareas of marketing. It involves several steps, including the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data.

Critical incidents were collected by research assistants, who were carefully trained to gather the data. They were encouraged to accumulate data from 100 participants using convenience sampling. In order to obtain a sample representative of customers of service organizations, they were instructed to collect data from a wide variety of people. Participants were asked to record their critical incidents on a standardized form.

Participants. One hundred and eighteen persons were approached to participate in this study. Fourteen persons indicated that they were either unwilling or unable to participate and four questionnaires were eliminated because of incompleteness. Eventually, 60 men and 40 women, ranging in age from 16 to 95, with a median age of 27, stayed in the sample: 3% of them had less than a high school education, whereas 25% had at least a bachelor's degree.

Questionnaire. The first question asked participants to indicate which of 29 different services they had purchased during the previous six-month period. This question was asked to reduce participants' uncertainty regarding what was meant by services and to check whether participants had purchased services during the last six months (cf., Keaveney, 1995). Then, participants were asked to recall the *last* negative experience with a service provider and to bring back as much of the actual experience as they possibly could. They were asked to describe this experience in an open-ended format. Next, participants were asked to indicate if they experienced any emotions as a result of the negative experience with the service provider. Then they were asked which emotions they experienced as a result of the service failure by means of open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were "It is possible that you experienced several emotions at that moment. Which emotion did you feel the strongest?" Subsequently, a closed-ended question was asked about the intensity of the reported emotion.

The question "How intense did you experience this emotion?" was answered on a five-point scale with end-points labeled *not intense at all* (1) and *very intense* (5). Finally, participants were asked whether they had experienced any other emotions because of this event, and if they had, which emotions (open-ended question) and to what extent (closed-ended question).

Data categorization. A classification based on the results of a taxonomic study of the vocabulary of emotions by Storm and Storm (1987) was used to categorize the results of this study. This particular taxonomy was chosen because Storm and Storm used a rigorous system to classify a large number of emotion terms into an adequate and comprehensive number of categories and subcategories: first, they used a sorting task and hierarchical clustering to identify a preliminary set of categories; then they expanded the words to be classified into these categories by asking various groups of participants to supply words related to feelings; and finally, four expert judges sorted the larger collection of words into categories. The result was a taxonomy that contains 525 different emotion terms distributed among seven categories and twenty subcategories. The categories include three negative emotion categories, two positive emotion categories, and two categories referring to cognitive states or physical conditions. Subcategories include shame, sadness, pain, anxiety, fear, anger, hostility, disgust, love, liking, contentment, happiness, pride, sleepy, apathetic, contemplative, arousal, interest, surprise, and understanding.

Results and Discussion

Negative service experiences. The participants of this study reported a wide variety of negative service experiences. Reported service failures fell in the categories of personal transportation (by airplane, taxi, or train), banking and insurance, entertainment, hospitality, and restaurants, (virtual) stores, hospitals, physicians, and dentists, repair and utility services, (local) government and the police, education, telecommunication companies, health clubs, contracting firms, hairdressers, real-estate agents, driving schools and travel agencies. On average, the negative events that participants reported had happened 9.5 weeks before.

Experienced emotions. The aim of this study was to investigate whether anger is commonly experienced in response to failed service encounters. The participants of this study experienced a broad range of negative emotions in response to a failed service encounter. The

emotion terms customers provided were classified into seven categories: *anger*, *sadness*, *hatred*, *anxiety*, *disgust*, *fear*, and *pain*. Other terms that were mentioned were classified into four additional categories provided by the classification of Storm and Storm (1987): *general negative terms*, *positive terms with interpersonal reference*, *terms related to passivity*, and *terms related to activity*. Finally, two additional categories, *appraisals* and a category labeled *other terms* were included to classify terms that did not tie in with the classification scheme of Storm and Storm.

On average, the participants provided 1.78 emotion terms: 5 participants experienced four emotions; 10 participants experienced three emotions; 43 participants experienced two emotions; and 42 participants experienced one emotion. Table 1 provides an overview of the results of this study.

Negative terms related to anger were mentioned most often. Anger terms were mentioned 95 times, corresponding to 53.37% of all items. Eighty-two percent of the participants mentioned a negative term related to anger (either as the most intensely experienced emotion or as the second-, third-, or fourth-strongest emotion). Sixty-nine percent of the participants mentioned a negative term related to anger as the most intense emotion. The specified anger terms include 'Angry', 'Rage', 'Irritated', 'Annoyed', 'Frustrated', 'Fed up', 'Indignant', and 'Grumpy'.

The second largest category is appraisals; cognitions associated with the perceived antecedents of emotions. Participants mentioned three different appraisals, 'powerless', 'unfair', and 'responsible'. Note that prior research associates the appraisal 'unfair' with anger, whereas 'powerless' is associated with both anger and sadness (Ruth et al., 2002; Shaver et al., 1987).

The third largest cluster is 'Negative terms related to Sadness'. Sadness terms were mentioned 24 times by 21 participants. This category includes the emotion terms 'Sad', 'Rejected', 'Disappointed', 'Despair', 'Dejected', and 'Useless'.

Other categories are considerably smaller than the afore-mentioned categories. Besides the afore-mentioned appraisals, eight further 'emotion' terms that the participants of this study provided did not fit the taxonomy of Storm and Storm (1987). As customers employed a rather broad definition of emotion, the emotion terms they provided included mood states, action tendencies, and opinions about the event and/or the service provider. These terms were categorized as 'Other terms'.

Table 1.1 *Customers' Emotions in Response to Service Failures*

	Strongest emotion	*2nd strongest emotion*	*3rd strongest emotion*	*4th strongest emotion*
Negative terms related to Anger				
Anger	30	8	2	-
Rage	13	8	1	-
Irritated	15	2	1	-
Annoyed	3	2	-	-
Frustrated	1	1	-	-
Fed up	2	-	-	-
Indignant	5	-	-	-
Grumpy	-	1	-	-
Appraisals				
Powerless	13	5	2	2
Unfair	2	1	-	-
Responsible	-	1	-	-
Negative terms related to Sadness				
Sadness	1	1	1	-
Disappointed	3	9	1	1
Rejected	-	1	-	-
Despair	2	1	1	-
Dejected	-	-	1	-
Useless	-	-	1	-
Terms related to Activity				
Excited	-	1	-	-
Surprise	1	2	-	-
Amazement	1	-	-	-
Disbelief	1	3	1	-
Perplexed	1	-	-	-
Negative terms related to Hatred				
Hatred	-	1	-	-
Aggression	1	-	1	1
Distrust	-	-	1	-
General negative terms				
Rotten	1	-	-	-
Negative terms related to Anxiety				
Upset	1	-	-	-
Terms related to Passivity				
Indifference	1	-	-	-
Positive terms with interpersonal reference				
Acceptance	-	1	-	-
Pity	-	2	-	-
Negative terms related to Disgust				
Disrespect	-	1	-	-
Negative terms related to Fear				
Fear	-	1	-	-
Negative terms related to Pain				
Pain	-	1	-	-
Others Terms				
Claustrophobic	1	-	-	-
Ridiculous	1	-	-	-
Felt like crying	-	1	-	-
Unreasonable	-	1	1	-
Dull	-	1	-	-
Stress	-	1	-	-
Discriminated	-	-	-	1

Note. The numbers in the second, third, fourth, and fifth column refer to how many times a specific emotion term was mentioned as respectively the strongest, second-strongest, third-strongest, or fourth-strongest emotion. A dash indicates that this emotion was not mentioned (as for instance the strongest emotion).

Multiple emotions. Fifty-eight participants mentioned more than one term: however, only 17 of them experienced multiple emotions. Anger and sadness were experienced most often in combination (14 times), followed by anger and fear (2 times) and fear and sadness (1 time).

Intensity of emotions. On a five-point scale, ranging from *not intense at all* (1) to *very intense* (5), the mean rating of the strongest emotion was 3.97. Moreover, the large majority of the responses (84%) fell above the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that the participants of this study did not report incidents that they considered trivial or inconsequential.

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that consumers experience a broad range of negative emotions in response to a failed service encounter. Anger was by far the most frequently experienced emotion; 82% of the participants experienced anger in response to the most recently experienced failed service encounter. This suggests that anger is a common emotion in response to failed service encounters.[1] Because the results of this study provide additional support for the contention that customer anger has a powerful impact on the profitability and performance of service firms, this study calls for more research on the nature of customer anger. The final section of this chapter provides a more detailed discussion of the issues covered in this dissertation.

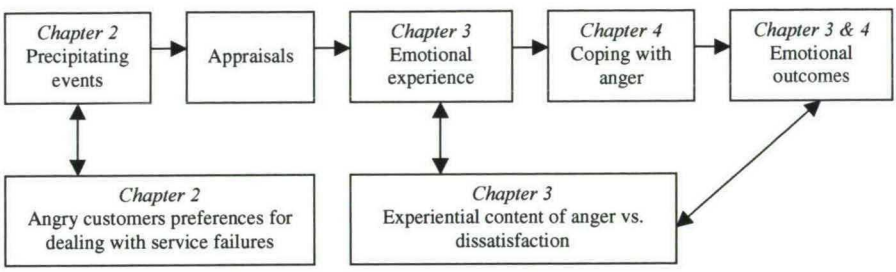
Objective and Outline of this Dissertation

The general objective of this dissertation is to contribute to understanding customer behavior through an increased understanding of customer anger. Accordingly, three empirical chapters on precipitating events of anger, its experience, coping with anger, and the behavioral consequences of customer anger are presented. More specifically, Chapter 2 deals with how to avoid customer anger and its consequences. Chapter 3 compares the experiential content of anger and service encounter dissatisfaction and investigates the effects of these emotions on behavioral responses such as switching and negative word-of-mouth communication. Finally,

[1] A similar study that invited participants to recount the *most intense* (instead of the last) negative experience with a service provider produced similar results. Ninety-five per cent of the participants experienced at least one anger-related emotion. Seventy-nine per cent of the participants mentioned an anger-related emotion as the most intense emotion.

Chapter 4 deals with the consequences of revenge thoughts that angry customers may develop as a result of a failed service encounter. Figure 1.2 provides a graphical representation of the outline of this dissertation. Next, these chapters are discussed in greater detail.

Figure 1.2 *Outline of this Dissertation*



In *Chapter 2*, the results of two studies provide an exploratory model of customer anger and angry customers' preferences for service recovery across instigations. Since systematic research on the precipitating events of customer anger in service settings is absent, Study 2.1 investigates and categorizes events that typically instigate customer anger. Seven factors, distributed over four main categories, are found to prompt customer anger: failures regarding *service delivery* (unreliability, inaccessibility, and company policies), failures regarding *interpersonal relationships* with customers (impolite behavior, insensitive behavior), *outcome failures*, and *inadequate responses to service failures*. The results of this study provide a conceptual model of anger in services and guidelines on how to avoid customer anger. However, because it is practically unfeasible to completely eliminate the possibility of angry customers, partly due to the intangible and inseparable nature of services, Study 2.2 identifies the service recovery preferences of angry customers across the precipitating events that were categorized in Study 2.1. Building from resource theory, the results of Study 2.2 suggest that successful recovery strategies not only correct the service failure, but also, and perhaps more importantly, deal with the angry customers' feelings themselves. Such feelings-based recovery components are found to be important across anger provocations. Preferences regarding recovery of the failure are closely related to the type of service failure.

Chapter 3 investigates the specific experience of anger and dissatisfaction and their effects on customers' behavioral responses to failed service encounters across industries.

Having established that anger and dissatisfaction are qualitatively distinct emotions in Study 3.1, Study 3.2, takes on a specific emotion approach to assess the relative contribution of anger and dissatisfaction to customers' behavioral responses. Building on previous research that indicates that service encounter dissatisfaction is related to behavioral responses (e.g. Maute and Forrester, 1993; Richins, 1987; Singh, 1988), Study 3.2 posits and shows that this effect is indirect and mediated by more specific emotions such as anger. This finding diverges from previous findings in marketing on the interrelationships among customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction, related consumption emotions, and customers' behavioral responses to service failure.

Chapter 4 investigates the effects of revenge thoughts on customers' emotions and behavioral intentions in response to failed service encounters. As delineated in Chapter 4, the relevance of this topic for marketers lies in the close relationship between consumers' goals, anger, and revenge fantasies. Study 4.1 focuses on the effects of revenge fantasies on anger. It is shown that revenge fantasies increase customer anger. Hence, the results of this study support an associative-network approach to the effects of revenge fantasies on anger and contradict earlier anecdotic evidence on the effects of revenge fantasies on feelings and behavior. Study 4.2 compares the effects of revenge fantasies with the effects of a related form of mental simulation: complaint thoughts. It is found that whereas revenge fantasies increase anger, the desire to get even at the service provider, and intentions to engage in negative word-of-mouth communication, they decrease intentions to remain loyal to the service firm. In contrast, complaint thoughts had divergent effects in that they were merely found to increase intentions to complain. Hence, it is shown that specific emotion-regulation strategies of angry consumers have divergent effects on emotions and behavioral intentions. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Finally, in *Chapter 5*, the findings of the empirical studies presented in this dissertation are summarized and discussed. Subsequently, three promising areas of future research on customer anger in services are briefly discussed. For now, let's get angry.

2

On Dodging Flying Phones: How to Avoid Customer Anger and its Negative Consequences

In June 2004, a 71-year old customer of Wells Fargo Bank entered the bank and pointed a loaded revolver at his loan officer. According to the police, the man threatened to shoot if errors on his account were not corrected. The man, who was described as being very angry, was eventually disarmed and arrested. He accused the bank of being "just a bunch of credit card thieves" (Associated Press, 2004b).

One month earlier, a 22-year old angry customer had phones flying across a store, striking an employee and causing more than $2,000 in damage. The man, who was also arrested and jailed, said that he was fed up with his cellular phone service. He declared that he planned only to yell at the store employees and that he just lost it once he had entered the store (Associated Press, 2004a).

These events illustrate that anger can have a profound impact on the customer experiencing this emotion, on the service provider, and on the relationship between the angry customer and the service provider. Although aggression, as in the afore-mentioned examples, is only one of the many possible reactions to anger, angry customers' behavior can sometimes put even the health and safety of service-firm employees in considerable danger. What's more, customer anger has been found to affect negative word-of-mouth communication and switching, above and beyond customer dissatisfaction (Bougie, Pieters, and Zeelenberg, 2003; Dubé and Maute, 1996; Nyer, 1997a; Taylor, 1994). Since it is also a common emotional response to failed services (Chapter 1, this dissertation), anger may have strong implications for the performance and profitability of service firms. For these reasons it is critical that service firms try to avoid customer anger, and in case that customers do get angry, that service firms effectively deal with customers' emotions.

To be able to avoid customer anger, service providers need to understand what events typically instigate this emotion in customers. Surprisingly, to date, we do not know much about instigations of customer anger. Although we know that core service failures (Dubé and Maute, 1996) and waiting for service (Folkes et al., 1987; Taylor, 1994) give rise to anger, systematic research on the precipitating events of this emotion in service settings is absent. Study 2.1 investigates and categorizes events that typically instigate customer anger to fill this void. Thus it provides a conceptual model of anger instigation in services and guidelines on how to avoid customer anger.

But what if, despite the best intentions of the service firm, services do fail and customers do get angry? Then it is crucial to have insight into the potential remedial actions that can be taken to deal with the angered customers. Prior research suggests that (idiosyncratic) negative emotions may shape the recovery preferences of customers. For instance, Smith and Bolton (2002) recently showed that customers who experienced negative emotions due to a service failure were generally less satisfied with service recovery than customers who responded with little or no emotions. Hence, it is suggested that service providers may benefit from adapting their recovery strategy to fit the specific recovery preferences reflecting the emotional state of the customer. However, this may not suffice, as delineated next.

A service failure may prompt various kinds of specific negative emotions, depending on how it is appraised by the customer. Along these lines, anger is instigated when customers appraise an event as being unpleasant and highly unfair, for which the service provider is (and oneself is not) to blame (see also Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, this dissertation; Ruth et al., 2002). These appraisals of 'highly unfair circumstances' and 'the service provider is to blame' have been shown to affect customers' beliefs that one is owed an apology and/or a refund (Folkes, 1984; Kelley, Hoffman, and Davis, 1993; Menon and Dubé, 2000). Accordingly, the specific emotion anger may shape specific preferences for service recovery.

No research to data has examined angry customers' preferences for service recovery. Therefore, building on previous knowledge of service recovery and the findings of Study 2.1, Study 2.2 investigates angry customers' preferences for service recovery in response to different types of service failures.

Study 2.1: Anger-Provoking Events

Conceptual Background

Suppose that you are in a fashion shop and that you have just found a clothing item that you like. You go to the counter to pay for the item. At the counter you find a shop assistant who is talking to a friend on the telephone. You have to wait. You wait for a couple of minutes, but the shop assistant is in no hurry to finish the phone call.

This event may make you angry. Waiting for service is a common cause of anger: the longer the delay, the angrier customers tend to be (Taylor, 1994).

Prior research in marketing has applied appraisal theory to understand why anger is experienced in such situations (e.g., Folkes et al., 1987; Nyer, 1997a; Taylor, 1994). Appraisal refers to the process of judging the significance of an event for personal well-being. The basic premise of appraisal theory is that emotions are related to the interpretations that people have about events: people may differ in the specific appraisals that are elicited by a particular event (for instance waiting for service), but the same patterns of appraisals give rise to the same emotions. Most appraisal theories see appraisals as being a cause of emotions (Parrott, 2001). Along these lines, appraisal theory has been used to understand why anger is experienced in service settings.

Customer anger is associated with events that are appraised as unpleasant and as highly unfair with an obstacle to overcome, for which someone else is responsible (Ruth et al., 2002). What's more, anger rises when the cause of the service failure is stable. Finally, it is associated with appraisals of high goal relevance, goal incongruence, and high coping potential (Folkes et al., 1987; Nyer, 1997a; Taylor, 1994).

Although appraisal theory provides useful insights into the role of cognition in emotional service encounters, recent research suggests that, although they are clearly associated to anger, none of the afore-mentioned appraisals is a necessary or sufficient condition for anger to arise (Kuppens et al., 2003; Smith and Ellsworth, 1987). That is, customers can experience anger without experiencing a situation as, for instance, unfair. Consequently, assertions about the relation between anger and appraisals "need to be specified in terms of contingent relations between both, meaning that they usually co-occur, instead of in terms of necessity or sufficiency" (Kuppens et al., 2003, p. 266). What's more,

for the specific purpose of avoiding customer anger, appraisal theory is too abstract to be diagnostic for services management. That is, service firm management may benefit more from a classification of incidents that are considered to be unfair (like for instance waiting for service and core service failures), than from the finding that unfair events are generally associated with customer anger.

In other words, in order to be able to avoid customer anger, it is crucial that service firm management knows what specific precipitating events typically elicit this emotion in customers. After all, it is easier to manage such events than the appraisals that may or may not be associated with these particular events.

Therefore, Study 2.1 investigates events that typically instigate customer anger in services. This study builds on a rich tradition of research in psychology that has specified typical instigations of anger in every-day life. In addition, it builds on research in marketing that has identified and classified service failures, retail failures, and behaviors of service firms that cause customers to switch services (Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault, 1990; Keaveney, 1995; Kelley, Hoffman, and Davis, 1993). Study 2.1 extends this research stream in that it specifically focuses on behaviors of service providers that instigate customer anger. In view of the fact that not every service failure will trigger anger and that not every angry customer will switch service providers (Bougie et al., 2003), existing classifications of services failures and causes of customer switching may not adequately represent behaviors of service providers that give rise to anger.

Method

Procedure. Following related research in marketing, the critical incident technique (CIT) was used to identify critical behaviors of service providers that instigate customer anger (e.g., Bitner et al., 1990; Keaveney, 1995; Kelley et al., 1993; Mangold, Miller and Brockway, 1999). Critical incidents were collected by 30 trained research assistants, who were instructed to collect 30 critical incidents each. In order to obtain a sample representative of customers of service organizations, they were instructed to collect data from a wide variety of people. Participants were asked to record their critical incidents on a standardized form in the presence of the interviewer. This has several advantages such as availability of the interviewer to answer questions and to provide explanation.

Questionnaire. Participants were asked to record their answers on a standardized questionnaire, which was modeled after previous applications of CIT in services (e.g., Keaveney, 1995; Kelley et al., 1993). The questionnaire began by asking participants to indicate which of 30 different services they had purchased during the previous six-month period. The period of six months was chosen because it is recent enough to gather reliable information and yet long enough to include incidents with less frequently purchased services such as airlines and physicians. Next, participants were asked to recall the last negative incident with a service provider that made them feel angry. They were asked to describe the incident in detail by means of open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were "What service are you thinking about?", "Please tell us, in your own words, what happened? Why did you get angry?" and "Try to tell us exactly what happened: where you were, what happened, what the service provider did, how you felt, what you said, and so forth." The exact questionnaire is provided in Appendix A.

Sample. Critical incidents were defined as events, combinations of events, or series of events between a customer and a service provider that caused customer anger. The interviewers collected 930 incidents. Seventy-one descriptions of customers (7.63%) were eliminated from further analyses because participants indicated that they could not report an incident that instigated anger, because the incidents were unreadable, because the incidents had happened more than six months ago, or because participants did not provide a critical incident that involved a service provider. The remaining 859 participants (452 males, 407 females) represented a cross-section of the population. Their age ranged between 16 and 87 with a mean age of 37.4. Approximately 2% of the participants had less than a completed high school education, whereas 45.1% had at least a bachelor's degree.

The reported incidents covered more than 40 different service businesses, including banking and insurance, personal transportation (by airplane, bus, ferry, taxi, or train), hospitals, physicians, and dentists, repair and utility services, (local) government and the police, (virtual) stores, education and child care, entertainment, hospitality, and restaurants, telecommunication companies, health clubs, contracting firms, hairdressers, real-estate agents, driving schools, rental companies, and travel agencies. On average, the negative events that participants reported had happened 18 weeks earlier.

Data Analysis

Unit of analysis. Since the term "critical incident" can refer to either the overall story of a participant or to discrete behaviors contained within this story, the first step in data analysis is to determine the appropriate unit of analysis (Kassarjian, 1977). In this study, *critical behavior* was chosen as the unit of analysis. For this reason, 600 critical incidents were coded into 886 critical behaviors. For instance, a critical incident in which a service provider does not provide prompt service and treats a customer in a rude manner was coded as containing two critical behaviors ("unresponsiveness" and "insulting behavior").

Categorization. Content analysis was used to examine the data (Kassarjian, 1977; Weber, 1985). As a first step, two judges coded critical incidents into critical behaviors. Next, (sub)categories were developed based upon these critical behaviors. Two judges (A and B) independently developed mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories and subcategories for responses 1 to 400 (587 critical behaviors). Two other, trained judges (C and D), independently sorted the critical behaviors into the categories provided by judges A and B. Finally, a fifth, independent judge (E) carried out a final sort.

Reliability and validity. A rigorous classification system should be "intersubjectively unambiguous" (Hunt, 1983), as measured by interjudge reliability. The interjudge reliability averaged .84, and no individual coefficients were lower than .80. The content validity of a critical incident classification scheme is regarded as satisfactory if themes in the confirmation sample are fully represented by the categories and subcategories developed in the classification sample. In order to determine whether the sample size was appropriate, two confirmation samples (hold-out samples from the original 859 samples) of 100 new incidents (299 critical behaviors) were sorted into the classification scheme with an eye to developing new categories. No new categories emerged indicating that the set of analyzed critical incidents forms an adequate representation of the precipitating events of anger in services.

Results

Categories. Participants reported a wide range of critical behaviors that made them angry. Some of these behaviors were closely related to the *outcome* of the service process (e.g., "my

suitcase was heavily damaged"). Other behaviors were related to *service delivery* (e.g., "For three days in a row I tried to make an appointment (...) via the telephone. The line was always busy.") or *interpersonal relationships* (e.g., "She did not stir a finger. She was definitely not intending to help me."). Finally, customers got angry because of *inadequate responses to service failures* (e.g., "He did not even apologize." or "He refused to give me back my money."). These four specific behavior types represent the four overarching categories of events that instigate customer anger.

Two of these categories were further separated into respectively three categories representing service delivery or procedural failures ("unreliability", "inaccessibility", and "company policies") and two categories representing interpersonal relationships or interactional failures ("insensitive behavior" and "impolite behavior"). The main reason for this was that the categories procedural and interactional failures would otherwise be too heterogeneous with respect to their composition and more importantly, with respect to ways of avoiding or dealing with these failures. For instance, avoiding anger in response to unreliability (not performing in accordance with agreements) will most likely call for a different - and maybe even opposite - approach than avoiding anger in response to company policies (performing in accordance with company rules and procedures), even though these failures are both procedural, that is, related to service delivery.

As summarized in the first column of Table 2.1, critical behaviors of service providers were thus classified into 7 categories and 28 subcategories. The 7 categories were unreliability, inaccessibility, and company policies (procedural failures), insensitive behavior and impolite behavior (interactional failures), outcome failures, and inadequate responses to service failures. These categories are defined in the second column of Table 2.1. Subcategories are also discussed in Table 2.1. For instance, Table 2.1 indicates that 'price agreements that were broken' (category 'unreliability', subcategory 'pricing') was mentioned 12 times as a cause of anger. Hence, broken price agreements represent 1.35% of the total number of critical behaviors (886) and 2% of the total number of the reported critical incidents (600). The sixth column indicates that 9 participants mentioned broken price agreements as the sole cause of their anger, whereas 3 participants mentioned at least one additional critical behavior (column 7). The eighth column provides typical examples of critical behavior per subcategory.

Table 2.1 *Instigations of Anger in Service Consumption Settings; Study 2.1*

(Sub)category	(Sub)category definition	No. of behaviors	No. of behaviors in % of behaviors	No. of behaviors in % of incidents	No. of behaviors in single-factor incidents	No. of behaviors in multi-factor Incidents	Example(s)
Procedural failures							
Unreliability	*Service firm does not perform the service dependably.*	*156*	*17.61*	*26.00*	*73*	*83*	
Delivery promises	Service provider does not provide services at the time it promises to do so.	104	11.74	17.33	42	62	Wait for appointment with dentist, physician or hairdresser, or on a plane, train, or taxi
Service provision	Service provider does not provide the service that was agreed upon.	40	4.52	6.67	22	18	Examples: Client receives other car than agreed upon with car rental company or other apartment than agreed upon with travel agent. Bicycle repairers, car mechanics, or building contractors carry out other work than agreed upon or work that was not agreed upon with their clients.
Pricing	Price agreements are broken.	12	1.35	2.00	9	3	"After a party we called a cab. We were with a party of five. A van would take us home for a fixed, low price. However, upon arrival the driver asked the regular clock price."
Inaccessibility	*Customers experience difficulties with engaging in the service process.*	*47*	*5.30*	*7.83*	*17*	*30*	

Table 2.1 continued

Communicative inaccessibility	Inaccessibility via telephone, fax, e-mail and/or the internet.	26	2.93	4.33	9	17	"For three days in a row I tried to make an appointment with my physician via the telephone. The line was always busy."
Physical Inaccessibility of service elements	Customers experience difficulties with accessing a certain element or part of the service.	12	1.35	2.00	4	8	Examples: Check-in counter of an airline company, cash-point of a supermarket, service desk of a holiday resort, or baggage claim at an airport.
Physical Inaccessibility of service provider	Difficult physical accessibility of service provider because of inconvenient locations or opening hours.	9	1.02	1.50	4	5	"It was three o'clock on a Saturday afternoon and the dry cleaner was already closed"
Company policies	*Service provider's rules and procedures or the execution of rules and procedures by service staff is perceived to be unfair.*	*76*	*8.57*	*12.67*	*45*	*31*	
Rules and procedures	Inefficient, ill-timed, and unclear rules and procedures	66	7.45	11.00	38	28	"It turned out that the [Cystic Fibrosis] foundation used unfair procedures for assigning families with cystic fibrosis to vacations. For example, some families were invited for years in a row even though this is not allowed." "Only two days before our wedding my wife was ordered to leave the country by the immigration office"

Table 2.1 continued

							"I went to the local administration to report a change of address. At the same time I wanted to apply for a parking license. In that case you must draw a number for the change of address first and later on you must draw a second number for the parking license. I got angry and asked why on earth that was necessary."
Inflexible service staff	Service staff does not adapt rules and procedures to reflect individual circumstances of customer	10	1.12	1.67	7	3	"It was an exceptionally hot day. The second-class compartments of the train were overcrowded. To avoid the bad atmosphere I went to a first-class compartment. When the guard came he sent us away. At that moment I flew into a rage."
Interactional failures							
Impolite behavior	*Service provider behaves rude.*	*84*	*9.48*	*14.00*	*46*	*38*	
Insulting behavior	Service provider is behaving offensive.	32	3.61	5.33	15	17	"The physician was getting fluid out of my knee. This was rather painful, so I told him that it hurt. He directly stopped even though there was some fluid left. When I asked him why he had stopped he said 'because you are a such a moaner'. That's no way to treat people."
Not taking client seriously	Service provider does not take client seriously.	28	3.16	4.67	15	13	"For some time I was hearing strange noises when I was driving my car. Again and again they [garage] fobbed me off with 'Yes, dear…' and Yes, love…' Eventually they had to replace the engine."

Table 2.1 continued

Dishonesty	Service provider tries to earn money in an improper manner.	16	1.81	2.67	10	6	"After we went to the theatre, we took a cab. The driver made a huge detour. I was mad because this was a plain rip-off."
Discrimination	Person or group is treated unfair, usually because of prejudice about race, ethnic group, age group, or gender.	8	0.90	1.33	6	2	"I was refused access to the bar because of my race, even though I was immaculately dressed. They literally told my that did not care for my kind of people"
Insensitive behavior	*Service provider does not make an effort to appreciate the customer's needs and/or pay little attention to customers or their belongings.*	*195*	*22.01*	*32.50*	*76*	*119*	
Unresponsiveness	Unresponsive staff does not provide prompt service to customers or does not respond to customers' requests at all	80	9.03	13.33	33	47	"I went to a cash desk [of a drugstore] but the salesperson walked away. At another cash desk two persons were helping one client. One of them looked at me but did not show any intention to help me. It took forever before I was finally being served." " I asked to girl to help me find the right size [clothes] for my grandson. She did not stir a finger. She was definitely not intending to help me."
Incomplete/incorrect information	Service provider withholds information from client or provides incomplete, imprecise, or incorrect information	61	6.88	10.17	21	40	"Our plane was not there. I got mad because they did not tell us why not or what to do."

Table 2.1 continued

Inaccuracy with personal data	Service provider handles personal information of client rather careless.	16	1.81	2.67	5	11	"I was looking for a summer-job and signed up at an employment agency. When I asked them about the state of affairs a couple of weeks later, I found out that I had not been signed up yet. They told me that they had lost my application form"
Attention	Service provider pays little attention to the customer.	15	1.69	2.50	8	7	"After the meal I asked for the check. The waitress nodded and I expected to get the check. After three cigarettes there was still no check. I looked around and saw that the waitress was having a lively conversation with the bartender."
Impersonal treatment	Service provider does not provide tailor-made solutions.	9	1.02	1.50	3	6	"I got angry because she [hairdresser] did not cut my hair the way I had asked her to…" "The mortgage counsellor was very dominant during the conversation. My own point of view was not sufficiently addressed"
Inconvenience	Customer ends up in inconvenient or uncomfortable situation often leading to physical distress.	8	0.90	1.33	2	6	"After landing [airplane], we had to stay in our seats for 1,5 hours. It was very uncomfortable".
Privacy matters	Service provider invades or disregards a person's privacy	3	0.34	0.50	2	1	"The welfare worker left the door open during our private conversation."
Irresponsible behavior	Service staff behaves irresponsible	3	0.34	0.50	2	1	"The schoolteacher let my very young children walk to their homes on their own when I was a little late to pick them up."

Table 2.1 continued

Outcome failures	*Quality of core service itself*	*191*	*21.56*	*31.84*	*76*	*115*	
Service mistakes	Small or big mistakes, which may cause damage to the customer or belongings of the customer.	115	12.98	18.50	47	68	"The waitress brought the wrong meal" "The physician prescribed the wrong medicine" "As a consequence of the operation I will not be able to ever walk again" "My suitcase was heavily damaged"
Defective tangibles	Inoperative, broken, badly prepared, or unsatisfactory tangibles.	35	3.95	5.83	6	29	"My cash card was not working." "After three weeks the coffee machine [bought in shop] broke down." "The food was cold" "We booked a very expensive holiday. However the hotel was an old, dirty, run-down slum, with holes in the carpeting. The swimming pool was unpainted and 95 centimeters deep. The dining-room looked like a stable."
Billing errors	Customers are mischarged for services.	25	2.82	4.17	10	15	
High prices	Service provider's prices are considered to be too high relative to an internal reference price or relative to prices competitors	16	1.81	2.67	13	3	"I ordered two drinks at the bar. I had to € 12. That is really an absurd price!" "The price of the DVD-player was € 1,250. At another store it was only € 900"."
Inadequate responses to service failures		*137*	*15.46*	*22.83*	*10*	*127*	

Table 2.1 continued

Interactional unfairness	Service employees' interpersonal behavior during the service recovery.	80	9.03	13.33	4	76	"He [waiter] did not even apologize"
Outcome unfairness	The outcome of the service recovery.	37	4.17	6.17	5	32	"I did not receive the newspaper. I called them on the phone and they promised that I would receive the newspaper that same day. Nothing happened" "He [hairdresser] refused to give me back my money"
Procedural unfairness	The perceived fairness of the service recovery process.	20	2.26	3.33	1	19	"Recently I bought a house. After moving in I noticed that the bathroom tap was defective. The contractor admitted that it was the firm's responsibility. However it took forever before they took action. Only after the chief executive of the company intervened they covered the expenses".

Note. Categories and corresponding subcategories are presented in column 1 and defined in column 2. Column 3 provides information on how many times specific themes were mentioned by the participants. Column 4 provides information about how many times a specific theme was mentioned as a percentage of the total number of themes (885). Column 5 contains the percentage of participants that mentioned a specific category or subcategory. Column 6 and 7 provide an overview of the distribution of incidents over one- or multi-factor incidents. Column 8 provides (verbatim) examples of critical behaviors, attitudes, and manners of service providers.

Inspection of Table 2.1 shows the wealth of specific precipitating events that led to customers' being angry about the service, and they indicate the importance of moving beyond general appraisal dimensions to understand when and why customers become angry.

Single versus Compound Incidents. The majority of the participants (58.5%) reported single incidents, involving one critical behavior. Indeed, all subcategories were mentioned in single incidents. This suggests that each and every subcategory represents service provider behavior that provides a sufficient reason for customer anger.

The remaining participants mentioned compound incidents that involved multiple critical behaviors: 36.8% of the participants mentioned incidents that involved two critical behaviors; 4.5% mentioned incidents that involved three critical behaviors; and finally, 1 participant mentioned an incident that involved four critical behaviors. An example of a typical compound incident is: "Suddenly the train stopped. After 20 minutes, they still had not told us why. I was kind of in a hurry, but my anger was not caused by the delay alone. It was also the result of the complete lack of information about what had happened and about when we would continue our journey." In this example anger is prompted by a combination of two behaviors: a service mistake and insensitive behavior.

Several combinations of critical behaviors were mentioned frequently. For instance, the combination of an outcome failure and inadequate responses to a service failure was mentioned by 10.8% of the participants. Several other combinations were also mentioned rather frequently, such as unreliability and insensitive behavior (4.7%), outcome failures and insensitive behavior (3.2%), and impolite behavior and insensitive behavior (3.2%). Other combinations were mentioned by less than 3% of the participants. These compound incidents show how multiple critical behaviors of service providers may jointly drive customer anger.

Discussion

The identification of precipitating events of anger is critical to understanding this emotion (compare Chapter 1). What's more, for service firm management, it is important to understand what critical behaviors from their side typically elicit anger in customers. For this reason, this exploratory study investigated precipitating events of customer anger in services.

The results of this study provide an adequate, unambiguous representation of precipitating events of customer anger and expand existing (appraisal) theories of

antecedents of customer anger. Specifically, seven event categories were found to instigate anger, including unreliability, inaccessibility, and company policies (the procedural failures), insensitive behavior and impolite behavior (the interactional failures), outcome failures, and inadequate responses to service failures. Each of these events was found to be a sufficient cause of customer anger. However, the compound incidents that were reported by the participants of this study suggest that critical behaviors of service providers may also interact in their effects on customer anger.

The foregoing findings imply certain extensions to services marketing research. Researchers have previously examined the effects of core service failures and waiting for service on anger. However, this study shows that the antecedents of anger are not limited to these two factors. For service firm management, the seven categories suggest areas in which managers might take action to prevent customer anger. For example, the finding that inaccessibility of services causes customers to get angry suggests that service providers may benefit from being easily accessible for consumers. The finding that customer anger may be caused by insensitivity and impoliteness of service staff implies that hiring the right people, adequate training of service employees, and findings ways to motivate service staff to adequately perform services also reduces customer anger.

The present results partly converge with prior studies that have categorized dissatisfying experiences with service firm employees (Bitner et al., 1990) and retail failures (Kelley et al., 1993). For instance, incomplete or incorrect information and billing errors have also come forward as dissatisfying experiences with service providers and as retail failures. These convergent findings suggest that certain service failures do not only commonly instigate dissatisfaction but also the more powerful negative emotion of customer anger. This is important given the finding that anger and dissatisfaction have distinctive effects on customers' responses to service failure (Bougie et al., 2003; see also Chapter 3) and the finding that the presence of negative emotions influences customers' preferences regarding service recovery (Smith and Bolton, 2002).

Besides these similarities, there are important differences with the afore-mentioned studies as well. For instance, incidents reported by the participants of this study include difficulties with engaging in the service process and unfair rules and procedures (company policies). These behaviors, which account for more than 20% of the reported anger-provoking incidents, did not come forward as unfavorable behaviors of service providers in

earlier research. These differences with previous studies on service or retail failures may result from the different focus of this study, in comparison with the afore-mentioned studies. From one point of view, the present study adopts a *broader* perspective by identifying all types of events that instigate customer anger (as opposed to merely interactions with employees [Bitner et al., 1990]) across industries (as opposed to retail failures [Kelley et al., 1993]). From another point-of-view, the present study adopts a *narrower* perspective than the afore-mentioned studies since it identifies instigations of customer anger as opposed to service or retail failures; not every service or retail failure will trigger anger. This shows how the classification scheme developed here builds on and extends earlier models of service and retail failures.

Six of the behaviors that were found to instigate customer anger have previously been related to fairness and/or justice. Unreliability (Clemmer and Schneider, 1996), company policies (Clemmer and Schneider, 1996) and accessibility (Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002) have been related to '*procedural fairness*', that is fairness of service delivery. Impoliteness (Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002) and insensitivity (Clemmer and Schneider, 1996; Tax, Brown and Chandrashekaran, 1998) have been associated with '*interactional fairness*', fairness of interpersonal relationships with service providers. Finally, outcome failures have previously been related to '*distributive*' or '*outcome fairness*' (e.g., Smith, Bolton, and Wagner, 1999; Tax et al., 1998). Interestingly, previous research has shown that these different justice or fairness dimensions are related to customers' preferences for service recovery (Smith et al., 1999). Specifically Smith et al., 1999 have demonstrated that customers prefer to receive recovery resources that match the type of service failure. However, as delineated in the following sections, recovery in kind may not suffice when customers are angry. To examine this issue in more detail, Study 2.2 investigates angry customers' preferences for recovery across the event categories that were developed in Study 2.1.

Study 2.2: Angry Customers' Preferences for Service Recovery

Knowledge of instigations of customer anger may help service firms to avoid having angry customers. However, despite their good intentions and attempts, it is practically unfeasible to

completely eliminate the possibility of angry customers, partly due to the intangible and inseparable nature of services. When customers get angry, it is critical that service providers respond effectively, since possible remaining hostile feelings may shape harmful behavior toward the service firm and its employees, as the examples in the introduction of this chapter demonstrate. Indeed, poor service recovery has been shown to intensify negative feelings of customers and to cause customer switching (Bitner et al., 1990; Keaveney, 1995; Smith and Bolton, 2002; Tax et al., 1998). Thus, actions taken by service firms in response to failed services may contribute positively or negatively to their eventual profitability and performance. Therefore insights in angry customers' preferences for service recovery are needed. These insights may help service firms to effectively deal with anger and thus to attenuate its harmful consequences for the firm. For these reasons, this study investigates angry customers' preferences for service recovery across failure types.

Hypotheses

This study builds on resource theory (Foa, 1971; Foa et al., 1993), emotion theory (Averill, 1982; Lazarus, 1991), and recent research findings in marketing (Smith et al., 1999) to understand the relationship between service failures that prompt customer anger and service recovery. Resource theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding interpersonal relationships. The theory specifies that a resource is anything that can become the object of exchange. Exchange objects include a wide variety of 'commodities' such as products, services, information, and money. Resource theory classifies resources into six generic categories: *status* is an expression of evaluative judgment which conveys high or low prestige, regard or esteem; *love* is an expression of affectionate regard; *information* refers to advice, instruction or enlightenment, but excludes those behaviors which could be classified as love or status; *money* is any coin, currency or token which has some standard unit of value; *goods* are tangible products, objects, or materials; and *services* involve activities which often constitute labor for another (Foa et al., 1993). At a general level one can distinguish these resources between *economic resources*, such as money, goods, and services and *interpersonal resources*, such as love and status. Service encounters can be considered mixed exchanges with both economic and social resources. Accordingly, service failures can result in the loss of economic resources (for instance money or time), social resources (for instance status or esteem), or both economic and social resources.

Smith et al. (1999) view a service failure and an ensuing service recovery as an exchange in which a loss experienced by a customer due to a service failure is compensated by a gain in the form of a recovery attempt. They show that dissatisfied customers prefer to receive recovery resources that match the type of service failure: that is, they prefer, for instance, outcome fairness (e.g., a redo or a compensation) in response to an outcome failure (e.g., a wrong meal or cold food in a restaurant or an overbooked hotel) and process fairness (e.g., an apology) in response to a process failure (e.g., inattentive or rude service staff).

However, customers may not always view a recovery that is in kind with the type of service failure as adequate. Indeed, previous resource theory findings have shown that repayment in kind does not suffice in negative, hostile exchanges (Bramel, Taub, and Blum, 1968; Foa, Megonigal, and Greipp, 1976; Worchel, 1961). It is therefore not evident whether such coping strategies would be optimal when customers are angry, as delineated next.

In a study of Foa et al. (1976), participants played in a lottery, together with a confederate. The confederate was selected to divide the pay for the participation between the participant and herself. In the control condition the pay was equally divided. In three experimental conditions, the confederate initially kept all the money to herself (an outcome failure). In a first experimental condition, the confederate never returned the money; in a second condition, the confederate eventually returned half the money; in the third condition, the confederate returned the money along with an apology and an expression of affection for the participant. The dependent variable of this study, the participants' residual anger toward the confederate, in the "money alone" group was virtually identical to the "no money group". In contrast, the residual anger of the "money, apology, and affection" group was about the same as in the control group. Repayment of exactly the amount withheld (outcome fairness) was viewed as insufficient and feelings of anger remained. These feelings diminished only when the recovery involved fair interpersonal treatment, in addition to fair compensation. In support of these findings, other studies have also shown that an apology attenuates feelings of anger and retaliatory intentions (Bramel et al., 1968; Worchel, 1961).

These basic resource theory findings strongly suggest that a mere recovery of a service failure (for instance a repair or refund in case of defective tangibles) is not necessarily effective in terms of reducing customer anger. A possible explanation for these findings is that an event that provokes anger is a demeaning (i.e., degrading) event, which results in a loss of personal pride, self-esteem or sense of personal worth (Averill, 1982; Lazarus, 1991;

see also Chapter 1). For instance, service providers who make us wait while they talk to a friend on the telephone make us angry because they do not pay enough attention to us. When they are in control of their behavior, they have chosen to not treat us the way we want them to. Hence, their behavior demeans us and they have just created a debt in terms of status (cf., Lazarus, 1991).

The afore-mentioned resource theory findings provide some support for the contention that angry customers want service providers to repay this debt, preferably with recovery components that express and/or redistribute this respect, regard, or esteem, like an apology. Thus, it is conjectured that interactional components have an important function in the reduction of customer anger, regardless of the type of failure. In other words, it is contended that recovery preferences of angry customers include two types of attributes: first, attributes that redistribute status or esteem, regardless of the failure type and second, attributes that are in kind with the service failure (or the critical behaviors of service providers). Along these lines, in response to an anger-provoking event in which a service provider does not provide prompt service, customers are expected to prefer both procedural recovery components (because this event involves a procedural failure) and interactional recovery components (because the event is demeaning). Likewise, in response to an anger-provoking core service failure, customers are expected to prefer both outcome recovery components and interactional recovery components. Finally, in result to interactional failures customers are expected to prefer interactional recovery components. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Interactional recovery components are desired by angry customers, regardless of the anger-provoking event.

H2: Outcome recovery components are desired when customers are angry in response to core service failures.

H3: Procedural recovery components are desired when customers are angry in response to unreliability, inaccessibility, and company policies.

Method

Design and procedure. Following Smith et al. (1999) scenarios were applied to investigate these hypotheses. A scenario-approach has been used to investigate the effect of emotions on

consumer decision-making, on consumers' preferences for service recovery, and on behavioral intentions of consumers (e.g., Louro, Pieters, and Zeelenberg, 2005; Shiv and Fedorikhin, 1999; Smith and Bolton, 2002). An advantage of a scenario approach is that it allows for a systematic investigation of angry customers' preferences for service recovery across failure type. To achieve this, six scenarios representing six categories that came forward in Study 2.1 were developed: unreliability, inaccessibility, company policies, insensitive behavior, impolite behavior, and outcome failures (since it is the topic of this study, the seventh cause of anger, inadequate responses to service failures, was not included as a condition). A second advantage of scenarios is that they allowed us to control for other factors than the type of failure, such as the stability or the severity of the failure (all scenarios were pre-tested to ensure that the six service failures instigated a similar intensity of anger) that may influence customers' preferences for recovery. A final advantage of the scenario approach is that it allows for an examination of customers' *preferred* service recovery strategy, rather than the strategies that were actually employed by service providers. Recall-based designs such as the critical incident technique could create a bias here, as it may lead to an account of the service recovery strategy that was actually employed by the service provider, particularly if this strategy produced intermediate or high levels of satisfaction with the service recovery.

Each of the six scenarios was developed for three different industries (banks, restaurants, and shops) to enhance the generalizability of our findings. Banks, restaurants, and shops were selected because the participants of Study 2.1 frequently reported negative experiences with these industries. Three examples of the scenarios are provided in Appendix B.

Measures. Seven-point multi-item scales were used to measure the intensity of service encounter dissatisfaction (Crosby and Stephens, 1987; 3 items; α = .780) and anger (Izard, 1977; 3 items; α = .727). These scales were introduced as follows: "To what extent would you experience the following emotions as a result of this event?" After indicating their emotions, participants were asked, in an open-ended format, to indicate what a service firm could do to adequately deal with their anger. Specifically, they were asked "You are angry because you find that *the service provider has treated you impolitely*" (the specific text that is printed in italics varied per scenario). We now ask you to indicate what, if anything, a

service provider can do to deal with this situation. We specifically want you to write down what you consider to be the best reaction of the service provider to deal with your anger."

Participants. Two hundred and seventy undergraduate students (186 male and 84 female students) participated as a part of course requirements. Although students may have somewhat different recovery component importance weights than other groups, we do not believe that this makes them less suitable than any other customer group to test the hypotheses of this study. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 28, with a median age of 20. They were randomly assigned to one of the conditions.

Manipulation checks. The scenarios effectively triggered emotions among the participants. The mean intensity of anger was 4.80 (*SD* 1.05); the mean intensity of dissatisfaction was 5.89 (*SD* 1.05). There were no significant differences in the intensity of these emotions among the 18 scenarios, which is desirable.

Data analysis

Unit of analysis. Content analysis was used to analyze participants' preferences for service recovery. In this study, recovery attributes were chosen as the unit of analysis. For this reason, 270 recovery scenarios were coded into 565 different recovery attributes. For instance, a scenario in which a customer preferred to make a new appointment with his or her financial advisor and an apology was coded as containing two recovery attributes ("redo" and "apology").

Classification of recovery components. The procedure that was used to develop categories and subcategories was very similar to the procedure employed in Study 2.1. As a first step, two judges coded the participants' answers into recovery activities. Then, they independently developed mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories. Finally, a third, independent judge carried out a final sort of the behaviors. Service recovery components were categorized into three categories (interactional, outcome, procedural recovery components), six subcategories (resource categories), and twenty recovery components. The inter-judge reliability averaged .90, and no individual coefficients were lower than .80.

Categories and subcategories are presented in Table 2.2. Interactional recovery components refer to the interpersonal treatment customers receive, outcome recovery components aim to restore distributive or outcome justice, and procedural recovery components are concerned with the perceived fairness of the means by which the ends are accomplished (Tax et al., 1998). Definitions of resource categories were adopted from Foa et al. (1993) and are described in the 'Hypotheses'-section.

Results

Descriptive statistics. The results suggest that there is generally something that can be done to deal with angry customers. Only five participants (1.9%) indicated that the service provider could not recover the situation in any way. The remaining participants provided an average of 2.12 critical recovery components: 76 participants (28.1%) preferred a single-component recovery strategy (involving one critical recovery component); 38.5% of the participants preferred two-component strategies; 24.8% preferred three-component strategies; 5.6% preferred four-component strategies; and 1.1% preferred five-component strategies.

Table 2.2 shows that an apology was mentioned most frequently as a service recovery component: 63.33% of the participants preferred an apology in response to an anger-provoking event. Other recovery components that were frequently mentioned by the participants were a redo (28.1%), information about why the problem had occurred (20.4%), a discount or small gift (20%), the assurance that it will not happen again (11.9%), a refund (10.7%) and flexibility (10.4%). Other recovery components were mentioned by less than 10% of the customers.

The recovery components provided by the participants of this study represent a wide range of resource types: status, services, information, and money and goods. The next section examines whether preferences for recovery components are related to the type of service failure.

Hypotheses tests. The evidence on Hypothesis 1 is mixed. Findings on the two smaller categories, *information* and *love*, are in line with the hypothesis that interactional recovery components are important regardless of the specific instigation of anger: no relation was found between the number of participants that preferred information ($\chi^2 = 6.94$, $p = .225$) or

love (χ^2 = 4.45, p = .486) components and the anger-provoking situation. Note that information (20.6%) and love (9.3%) components were mentioned by a relatively small proportion of the participants.

Table 2.2 *Service recovery components per resource class; Study 2.2*

Interactional recovery components	
Status	
Apology (*171*)	client is offered an apology.
Assuming responsibility (*11*)	service provider takes the blame for the service failure.
Honesty (*1*)	staff provides client with honest information about the problem.
Politeness (*6*)	staff exhibits well-mannered, courteous behaviour.
Reassurance (*32*)	service provider makes sure that it will not happen again
Staff attitude (*10*)	staff wants to make sure that client leaves satisfied
Information	
Explanation (*55*)	client is provided information about why the problem has occurred.
Feedback (*1*)	client is provided information about the status of the problem and what is being done to resolve the problem.
Love	
Empathy (*29*)	client receives caring, individualized attention.
Friendliness (*10*)	service provider deals with the service failure in an open and warm fashion.
Outcome recovery components	
Money/goods[1]	
Discount/small gift (*54*)	service provider provides discount or small gift (e.g., free coffee).
Refund (*29*)	service provider gives client is his/her money back or compensates the client for losses
Replacement (*10*)	replacement of defective merchandise
Store credit (*10*)	service provider gives client a coupon or voucher
Services	
Redo (*76*)	service provider redoes the service in a satisfactory manner or corrects the mistake for instance by providing alternative.
Repair (*1*)	service provider fixes product involved.
Procedural recovery components	
Initiation (*4*)	service provider deals with the problem pro-actively.
Intervention (*21*)	manager or other employee helps to resolve the problem.
Flexibility (*28*)	service provider adapts the complaint handling procedure to reflect client's individual circumstances.
Timing/speed (*10*)	service provider resolves the problem in a timely fashion

Note. Numbers between brackets denote how many times a specific service recovery component was mentioned. N=270. [1] The resource components money and goods were combined because participants frequently mentioned these resources in one breath, for instance "a discount or a free drink" or "a discount or a small gift".

The frequency with which status components were mentioned also hints at the importance of interactional recovery components across instigations. A total of 72.2% (195/270) of the participants mentioned at least one component that conveys esteem, regard, or respect in one way or another. Status components were mentioned 231 times, accounting for 40.8% of the total number items. This suggests that this particular interactional recovery component plays a substantial role in the reduction of anger for a large group of customers and that the role of status components is not limited to interactional failures. Indeed, even in the company policies-condition, where status components were mentioned by the smallest percentage of participants in comparison to other conditions, status components were still mentioned by 42.2% of the participants. Nonetheless, a chi-square analysis indicated that there were significant differences in the number of participants that preferred these components across anger-provoking incident at $p < .001$. ($\chi^2 = 34.51$). Table 2.3 shows that status components are particularly important for customers that have experienced impolite or insensitive behavior of service providers and somewhat less important for customers that become angry because of a service provider's policy.

The evidence on Hypothesis 2 is also mixed. In line with hypothesis 2, *money and/or goods* were particularly important in response to outcome failures ($\chi^2 = 34.51$, $p = .029$). However, *services* (a redo) were not. Preferences for a redo were particularly prevalent when service providers did not perform services the way they had promised, after an outcome failure, and when customers experienced difficulties with engaging in the service process.

The evidence for hypothesis 3 is again mixed. Two procedural recovery components were frequently preferred in response to service failures: *flexibility* was mentioned 28 times, of which 24 times in response to company policies (indeed a procedural failure), and intervention was mentioned 21 times, of which 13 times in response to impolite behavior of a service-firm employee (an interactional failure).

Table 2.3 *Preferences for Recovery Components in Response to Different Causes of Customer Anger; Study 2.2*

Category	Unreliability	Accessibility	Company policies	Outcome failure	Insensitive behavior	Impolite behavior	Total	χ^2-value (p-value)
Interactional components	*44*	*47*	*33*	*41*	*57*	*53*	*276*	
Status, e.g., apology or politeness	29	33	19	34	41	39	195	34.51 (<.001)
Information, e.g., explanation	10	9	8	4	13	12	56	6.94 (.225)
Love, e.g., empathy or friendliness	5	5	7	3	3	2	25	4.45 (.456)
Outcome components	*43*	*23*	*12*	*52*	*22*	*15*	*167*	
Money/goods, e.g., discount/small gift or refund	12	9	7	36	19	7	90	7.10 (.029)
Services, e.g., redo or repair	31	14	5	16	3	8	77	56.99 (<.001)
Procedural components	*6*	*9*	*28*	*0*	*6*	*13*	*62*	
Other, e.g. initiation or flexibility	6	9	28	0	6	13	62	58.46 (<.001)

Note. Columns 2 to 7 denote how many times a participant mentioned at least one recovery component that was categorized into a category. For instance, 29 participants that read the unreliability scenario mentioned at least one status component, and 9 participants that read the accessibility scenario mentioned at least one money/goods component. The last column provides the results of Chi-square tests that test whether angry customers' preferences for recovery components differ over various instigations.

Dimensional analysis of recovery components. To gain further insight in angry customers' preferences for service recovery components, correspondence analysis was performed (Greenacre, 1984; Hoffman and Franke, 1986). Correspondence analysis was used to further investigate the relationship between anger-provoking events and preferred recovery attributes.

The results indicated that two dimensions were sufficient to represent the structure adequately (proportion of inertia of the first dimension = .588; proportion of inertia of the second dimension = .253). Table 2.4 provides the numerical results of the correspondence analysis. The two columns headed coordinate contain the coordinates of the points on the first and second principal axes. The column "mass" contains the weights for each point. The contributions quantify the importance of each point in determining the direction of the principal axes and serve as guides to interpretation of the axes.

Table 2.4 *Numerical Results of Correspondence Analysis of Table 2.3 Data; Study 2.2*

Category	Mass	Contribution Axis 1	Contribution Axis 2	Coordinate Axis 1	Coordinate Axis 2
Status, e.g., apology or politeness	.386	.006	.078	.081	-.232
Information, e.g., explanation	.111	.019	.004	-.262	-.097
Love, e.g., empathy or friendliness	.050	.029	.019	-.490	.323
Money/goods, e.g., discount/small gift or refund	.178	.235	.167	.734	-.501
Services, e.g., redo or repair	.152	.077	.732	.456	1.134
Procedures, e.g. initiation or flexibility	.123	.633	.000	-1.451	.005

The results suggest that he horizontal dimension in the plot distinguishes procedural recovery components from outcome recovery components. Procedural recovery components are located to the left of the horizontal axis, outcome recovery components (services and money and/or goods) are located to the right of the horizontal axis. The second dimension differentiates tangible from intangible recovery components: services are located at the top of the vertical dimension, money and/or goods are at the bottom of this axis. The interactional components status, love, and information are placed close to the origin of the two-dimensional space.

Figure 2.1 *Recovery Components and Instigations of Customer Anger; Study 2.2*

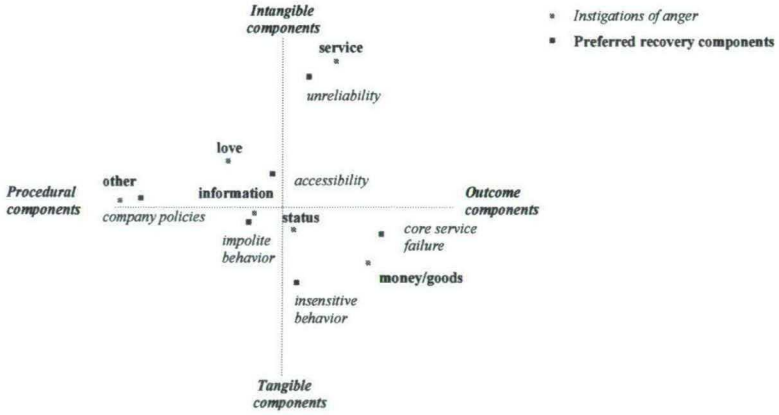


Figure 2.1 provides an overall picture of the anger-provoking events vis-à-vis preferred recovery attributes, using the distribution of responses in Table 2.3. The results obtained from the correspondence analysis converge with the results of the chi-square analyses. The central position of the interactional recovery components love (e.g. empathy), status (e.g. apology) and information reflects that these recovery components are important across instigations of customer anger. From Figure 2.1, the proximity of outcome failures to money and/or goods indicates that money and/or goods are strongly preferred by customers that are angry in response to outcome failures. Similarly, procedural components are associated with company policy failures, and services (a redo) with unreliability.

Discussion

When customers get angry, it is crucial that service providers respond adequately. The purpose of this study was to investigate angry customers' preferences for service recovery. The results show that angry customers prefer a wide variety of components in response to failed services. Although the evidence on all hypotheses is mixed, the results of this study provide some support for the contention that there are two recovery elements that shape an adequate response to customer anger: a correction of the mistake via a recovery in kind with the failure, and (across anger-provoking events) the reduction of angry, aggressive, and hostile feelings via status (e.g., an apology or the reassurance that it will not happen again),

love (e.g., a friendly, empathic recovery) and information (e.g., an explanation of why the failure has occurred) components. The frequency with which interactional components were mentioned, the central position of recovery components on the graphical representation of recovery components, and the results of the chi-square tests for information and love all point in this direction.

Hence, the results suggest that a mere recovery of the service failure is insufficient and thus inadequate when customers are angry. On the other hand, the deployment of excessive resources may also be inadequate in certain situations; others have previously explained how and why over-rewarded customers may be less satisfied with the recovery than those who receive equitable rewards (Austin and Walster, 1974; Smith et al., 1999). Apart from the *amount* of the compensation, it may also be inadequate to use strategies that overcompensate with respect to the *type* of recovery components that are deployed. For instance, when service providers are not blamed for the service failure, customers do not expect an apology (Folkes, 1984; Kelley et al., 1993). When service providers nonetheless do apologize for a service failure for which they are not to blame, this may thus be misinterpreted as a 'declaration of guilt'. In consequence, customers may reappraise the event as an event for which the service is responsible after all. Like this, excessive recovery strategies may actually increase angry feelings instead of decreasing them.

General Discussion

Theoretical implications. The results of two studies provide a framework of instigations of customer anger and angry customers' preferences for service recovery across instigations. In Study 2.1, seven event categories were found to prompt customer anger: failures regarding *service delivery* (unreliability, inaccessibility, and company policies), failures regarding *interpersonal relationships* with customers (impolite behavior, insensitive behavior), *outcome failures*, and *inadequate responses to service failures*. Hence, Study 2.1 shows that the antecedents of anger are not limited to the (two) factors of which the effects on anger have previously been investigated.

Future academic research may aim to quantify the intensity and universality of the relations between anger and the seven event categories that came forward in Study 2.1. Since

the results of Study 2.1 also suggest interactions among these event categories in their effect on customer anger such research may benefit from including multiple event categories.

Study 2.1 adds to the extant literature that has relied on appraisal patterns to explain why customers get angry. Appraisal theory suggests that appraisals mediate between precipitating events of anger and the experience of anger. Future research may investigate this contention to provide empirical support for the following causal chain of events in service settings: precipitating events → appraisals → emotional experience.

Building on Study 2.1, Study 2.2 investigated angry customers' preferences for service recovery. A classification of these preferences suggests that adequate service recoveries contain two elements: (1) an effort to decrease angry customers' feelings via an apology, a friendly and empathic recovery, and information about the causes of the problem (representative of status, love, and information resources); and (2) an approach that deals with angry customers' emotions via a recovery of the service failure. Further research is needed to test the quantitative effects of specific resources and/or recovery components on the reduction of customer anger. Such research may enhance our understanding of service recovery and enable us to provide service firm management with more specific guidelines for service recovery.

The present results suggest that future studies on service recovery may benefit from using resource categories (Foa, 1974; Foa et al., 1993) to test specific hypotheses on the relationship between the type of service failure and customers' preferences regarding ensuing recovery strategies. For instance, the results of Study 2.2 suggest that *specific* interactional recovery components, that is, status components, play a central role in the reduction of angry feelings. As explained earlier, anger-provoking events are degrading and thus result in loss of (self-esteem). Angry customers want service providers to redistribute esteem in service recovery. The results of Study 2.2 suggest that the deployment of other interactional recovery resources, such as empathy, friendliness, and an explanation (components of the resource categories love and information, which are both interactional recovery categories on a higher level of abstraction) are far less important and may therefore be less effective with respect to the reduction of angry customers' feelings for the reason that they do not redistribute respect. Along these lines, specific interactional resources (status, love, and information) may have idiosyncratic beneficial effects on customers' evaluations of service recovery and the intensity of their emotions and feelings after recovery. Hence, research using specific resources may result in an improved understanding of customers' preferences for service recovery.

Another area for further research is suggested by the limitations of this study. The use of students as participants may have affected the results of Study 2.2 because they, given their financial situation, may have a stronger preference for financial compensation (e.g., a discount) than the average customer. On the other hand, the analyses of Study 2.2 showed that in general, and in line with our hypotheses, outcome recovery components were closely linked to outcome failures. This result converges to previous research findings on service recovery preferences that used a broader sample (e.g. Smith et al., 1999). Although this is reassuring, follow-up research using a wider sample base is necessary.

Managerial implications. An emerging stream of management literature and training programs on customer anger management (e.g., Morgan, 1996, Riley, 2002; Slowik, 1998) suggests that whereas academic research on customer anger is relatively scarce, practitioners are very sensitive to the issue of customer anger.

Nonetheless, the managerial literature is inconsistent on the subject of instigations of customer anger. A wide variety of potential instigations of anger are offered. For instance, Slowik (1998) speculates that anger is instigated by a host of events such as unmet expectations, a powerless feeling, untrained personnel, dislike of the organization, discourtesy, being ignored, conflicting stories, invalidated feelings, mood states, frustration, integrity that is being questioned, honesty that is challenged, embarrassment, vindication, a failure to listen, personal prejudices, manipulation, and so forth. On the other hand, Riley (2002) offers only a two possible instigations of anger; he suggests that in most cases, the source of anger will involve a money- or time related issue. Through the collection of "grounded events", or actual events that made customers angry, the findings of Study 2.1 may help service firm management to understand the causes of customer anger.

For service firm management, the seven categories suggest areas in which managers might take action to prevent customer anger. What's more, as it provides a comprehensive and across-industries classification of causes of customer anger, the findings of Study 2.1 may serve as a basis to conduct company-specific research into the instigations of anger. Company-specific surveys based on this categorization may help service firms to establish improvement priorities. Such improvements will in general be feasible; service staff can be trained to avoid incidents provoked by insensitive or impolite behavior and adequate strategies to match supply and demand may avoid incidents in which a service firm is inaccessible.

A web search demonstrates that there is a vast amount of recommendations to service firm management on defusing customer anger: the phrase "dealing with angry customers" yielded 90,600 hits[1]. A closer inspection of these hits reveals that a substantial number of management consulting and training agencies offer seminars, workshops, training programs, courses, books, and/or videos on dealing with angry customers (e.g., www.customercaremc.com; www.strategiestraining.com; www.work911.com). Such management literature and training programs provide service firm management with many useful guidelines on dealing with angry customers. For instance, in line with the finding of Study 2.2 it is sometimes suggested that dealing with angry customers entails more than a mere recovery of the service failure (Bacall, 2004):

> Ever notice that with a really angry person, even if you can "fix" the problem, the person still acts in angry or nasty ways? Why is that? Well, actually angry customers want several things. Yes, they want the problem fixed, but they also want to (...) have their upset and emotional state recognized and acknowledged.

The present research provides empirical support for these informed contentions by practitioners. More importantly, it proposes specific guidelines and a conceptual framework based on resource theory on how service providers can deal with customers' upset and emotional state. On this specific issue, the results of Study 2.2 provide useful extensions to the literature. For instance, whereas managerial literature and training programs generally recommend that service providers should be empathic when they are dealing with angry customers, it sometimes overlooks the notion that they should restore respect and esteem (see for instance http://performance/appraisals.org/Bacalsappraisalarticles/articles or http://www.mainautomotive.com/artman/publish/article_21.shtml), because this is what actually was taken away by the anger-provoking event. Indeed, the results of Study 2.2 suggest that the expression and redistribution of respect and esteem are rather important to angry customers. Hence recovery strategies that include an apology or the reassurance that it will not happen again may prevent that on one 'fine' day, service providers find phones flying across their store.

[1] This web search was carried out with Google on August 2nd 2004.

Appendix A

Questionnaire: Study 2.1

Negative Experiences With Service Providers

In this research we are interested in your negative experiences with service providers. It is part of a bigger research project of Tilburg University on negative experiences with service providers.

It is important that you read the following questions carefully and that you try to answer them as detailed as you possibly can. The questionnaire has several parts that will be introduced each time. There are no right or wrong answers; we are interested in your personal experiences. All information will be treated strictly confidential and will be processed anonymously.

Please indicate which of the following 30 services you have purchased during the previous six months.

0 Airline company
0 Bank
0 Bicycle repairer
0 Café
0 Car repairer
0 Child care
0 Cinema
0 Contractor
0 Dentist
0 Driving school
0 Dry cleaner
0 Government
0 Hairdresser
0 Hospital
0 Hotel
0 Insurance agency
0 Local government
0 Mortgage counselor
0 Physician
0 Plumber
0 Public transportation
0 Real estate agent
0 Restaurant
0 School/ university
0 Shoe repairer
0 Shop
0 Sport/ health club
0 Taxi
0 Telecommunication company
0 Theatre

Please try to recall the last negative experience with a service provider that made you angry. That is, when you became genuinely angry as a result of a service encounter or the direct outcome of a service encounter.

What service are you thinking about?

Please tell us, in your own words, what happened? Why did you get angry?

Try to tell us exactly what happened: where you were, what happened, what the service provider did, how you felt, what you said, and so forth.

How long ago did the event take place?

Finally, we would like you to provide some general information.

What is your gender?

0 Male

0 Female

What is your age?

_____ years.

What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

0 Lager onderwijs (incl. LAVO en VGLO)

0 Lager beroeps onderwijs (LBO/LTS/LEAO/huishoudschool/VBO etc.)

0 Middelbaar beroeps onderwijs

0 Hoger algemeen en voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs (HAVO/VWO/HBS)

0 Hoger beroeps onderwijs

0 Wetenschappelijk onderwijs

This was the final question of this questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Appendix B

Sample Scenarios: Study 2.2

Bank: unreliability

You want to open a new savings account. You want to transfer a considerable amount of money from your current account to this new account. Therefore you have called your bank to make an appointment with your financial advisor. You have made an appointment for ten o'clock. When you arrive at your bank at ten o'clock you are told that the financial advisor has just gone into a new appointment. You are told that the advisor will not be able to see you anymore today.

You are angry because the bank has not kept its promises.

Shop: outcome failure

You have bought a € 20 shirt in a shop. You go home. When you put you shirt on, it tears up immediately.

You are angry and you hold the shop responsible for the bad quality of the shirt.

Restaurant: insensitivity

You go to a restaurant with somebody to have dinner. After dinner you summon the waiter because you want to pay the bill. The waiter nods in your direction and walks towards the bar. Twenty minutes later, you are still waiting for the bill. All the time the waiter is engaged in a lively conversation with the bartender. They clearly enjoy their conversation.

You are angry because you find that the restaurant does not pay enough attention to you.

3

The Experience and Behavioral Implications of Anger and Dissatisfaction in Services[1]

Anger and dissatisfaction are related emotions, which are often experienced after failed service encounters. Customers may experience both anger and dissatisfaction in response to waiting for service, dealing with unresponsive or impolite employees, and core service failures such as billing errors or poorly executed repair jobs. The resemblance of anger and dissatisfaction is also apparent from the literature. Emotion research describes dissatisfaction as "a negative term, related to anger, hatred, and disgust" (Storm and Storm, 1987, p. 811), and marketing literature reports significant correlations between anger and dissatisfaction (e.g., Folkes et al., 1987). On the other hand, marketing and emotion literature also suggests that these specific emotions have idiosyncratic behavior and behavioral tendencies associated with them. For instance, research examining customer dissatisfaction finds that customers would rather remain passive than complain when they are dissatisfied (Oliver, 1996). In contrast, complaining appears to be a fairly common response to anger (Roseman et al., 1994; Shaver et al., 1987).

However, to date the distinctive experiences of anger and dissatisfaction and their possible diverging effects on customers' responses to a wide range of service failures have not received much research attention. Such research is needed to determine whether there is theoretical and empirical reason to regard anger and dissatisfaction as distinctive emotions and to assess if and how they differentially affect the behavior marketing management is eventually interested in. We report the results of two studies to fill this void.

[1] This chapter is based on Bougie, Roger, Rik Pieters, and Marcel Zeelenberg (2003), "Angry Customers Don't Come Back, They Get Back: The Experience and Behavioral Implications of Anger and Dissatisfaction in Services," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 31, pp. 377-393.

Study 3.1 aims to show that anger and dissatisfaction are different emotions. This study, exploratory in nature, makes the following contributions. First, it compares the experience of anger and dissatisfaction and thus provides empirical reasons to regard them as distinctive emotions. Second, this study explicitly focuses on the experience of anger and dissatisfaction in a consumption setting. Thus, findings about the specific phenomenology of anger and dissatisfaction may help marketers to better understand when and why customers engage in particular post-consumption behavioral responses, such as switching, complaining, and negative word-of-mouth (WOM).

Having established that anger and dissatisfaction are distinct emotions in Study 3.1, Study 3.2 tests hypotheses on the specific, independent effects of service encounter dissatisfaction and anger on customers' behavioral responses to service failure. This study contends that while anger has a *direct* effect on customers' behavioral responses to service failure when dissatisfaction is controlled for, service encounter dissatisfaction is not directly related to behavioral responses to service failure when anger is controlled for. Building on previous research that indicates that service encounter dissatisfaction is related to behavioral responses (e.g. Maute and Forrester, 1993; Richins, 1987; Singh, 1988), the present study posits that this effect is *indirect* and mediated by more specific emotions such as anger.

Study 3.2 aims to contribute to the literature in the following ways. First, building on emotion theory and the findings of Study 3.1, we aim to show that anger mediates the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on customers' behavioral responses. Second, Study 3.2 investigates the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction and anger on customers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses, whereas prior research that includes both emotions focuses on behavioral intentions. Since behavioral intentions are an imperfect proxy for behavioral responses, the current findings add to the validity of previous research. Third, previous research on the effects of anger on customers' behavioral responses to service failure is service or industry specific, which limits the generalizability of the findings. In the present research we take on a broad, cross-industry perspective by using retrospective experience sampling as a method. To summarize, this article investigates the following research questions: Is the experiential content of dissatisfaction and anger qualitatively different? What are the independent, direct effects of service encounter dissatisfaction and anger on customers' behavioral responses to service failure? How are service encounter dissatisfaction

and anger related and how do they directly and indirectly affect customers' behavioral responses to failed service encounters?

Study 3.1: The Experience of Anger and Dissatisfaction

Differentiating Emotions by their Experiential Content

In this study, we intend to show that anger and dissatisfaction are distinct emotions. Recent research aiming to find differences among emotions has mainly focused on appraisal patterns or on experiential content. These two approaches are clearly different from each other. Whereas appraisal theory concentrates on *cognitions associated with the perceived antecedents* of particular emotions, the focal point of the experiential content approach is on a wider range of states that are assumed to be central components of *the emotional experience* itself (Roseman et al., 1994).

Appraisal theory holds that specific emotions are associated with specific patterns of cognitive appraisals. Appraisal refers to the process of judging the significance of an event for personal well-being. To arouse an emotion, an event must be appraised as affecting a person in some way. People may differ in the specific appraisals (or attributions) that are elicited by a particular event, but similar patterns of appraisals typically give rise to the same emotions. For example, anger in response to a service failure arises when customers appraise an event as unfair, with high service provider control over the service failure, and a stable cause of the service failure (Folkes et al., 1987; Ruth et al., 2002; Taylor, 1994). In addition, anger is associated with appraisals of high goal relevance, goal incongruence, and high coping potential (Nyer, 1997a).

An understanding of appraisals is important, since it may help marketers to understand why specific emotions arise. As a result, there is a growing number of conceptual and empirical studies of appraisals in marketing (e.g. Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer, 1999; Nyer, 1997a; Ruth et al., 2002). In contrast, the experiential content of emotions has been largely neglected in marketing research. Therefore while much is known about the cognitive antecedents of anger and dissatisfaction, very little is known about their experiential content; that is, what it means to be dissatisfied or angry.

Basic emotion research on experiential content (e.g. Davitz, 1969; Roseman et al., 1994; Wallbott and Scherer, 1988; Zeelenberg et al., 1998) investigates a wide range of

characteristics to differentiate emotions. For instance, Roseman et al. (1994) propose that emotions can be differentiated in terms of the following five experiential categories: (1) feelings, (2) thoughts, (3) action tendencies, (4) actions, and (5) emotivational goals. Feelings are perceived physical or mental sensations. Thoughts are ideas, plans, conceptions, or opinions produced by mental activity. Action tendencies are impulses or inclinations to respond with a particular action. Actions include actual behavior that may or may not be purposive. Emotivational goals describe the goals that accompany discrete emotions. Emotivational goals or emotional motives differ from action tendencies in that the latter term refers to specific behavioral responses, whereas the former refers to desired goal states. The following example of the experiential content of regret may further clarify the distinction between the five experiential categories; regret may involve the feeling that one should have known better, thoughts about what a mistake one has made, feeling the tendency to kick oneself, actually doing something differently, and (the emotivational goal) wanting to get a second chance (Zeelenberg et al., 1998).

Although conceptually distinct, cognitive appraisals and emotional experience are related. Specific appraisal outcomes elicit specific emotions with a specific experiential content. In turn, emotional experience is the proximal cause of all that follows, including specific adaptive behavior (Arnold, 1960; Lazarus, 1991; Plutchik, 1980; Roseman et al., 1994). Thus, emotional experience is more directly related to post-consumption behavioral responses than appraisals (or attributions) are. For instance, the emotional motive of fear, wanting to be in a safe place, explains why people run away. Likewise, emotivational goals associated with anger and dissatisfaction may help to predict and explain the impact of these emotions on complaint behavior, negative WOM, and switching. Therefore we will use the experiential content approach to investigate whether anger and dissatisfaction are different emotions.

The Subjective Experience of Anger and Dissatisfaction

Study 3.1 aims to assess specific feelings, thoughts, action tendencies, actions and emotivational goals that differentiate between the experience of anger and dissatisfaction. Consequently, specific predictions for each of these five experiential categories are needed. To conceptualize the experience of anger we build on extant emotion theory. The conceptualization of the experience of dissatisfaction relies on both theory and on a pilot study that was conducted, and detailed below.

Anger is associated with appraising an event as harmful and frustrating. It is aimed at another person, an institution, or the self. A crucial aspect distinguishing anger from other negative emotions is the element of blame, or the belief that we have been voluntarily wronged unjustifiably (Averill, 1982; Lazarus, 1991).

A wide range of studies that focus on diverse aspects of emotion phenomenology provide data for the experiential content of anger (e.g. Averill, 1982; Berkowitz, 1990; Davitz, 1969; Deffenbacher et al., 1996; Frijda, 1986; Roseman et al., 1994). From this literature, we gleaned the following experiential qualities of anger (categories italicized). People associate anger with *feelings* "as if they would explode" and "of being overwhelmed by their emotions." Typical *thoughts* associated with anger are "thinking of violence towards others" and "thinking of how unfair something is." Anger is associated with *action tendencies* such as "feel like behaving aggressively" and "letting go." *Actions* that are characteristic for anger are "saying something nasty" and "complaining." Finally, typical *emotivational goals* are "wanting to hurt someone" and "wanting to get back at someone." Table 3.1 provides an overview of predicted anger items.

In contrast to the experience of anger, relatively little is known about the experience of dissatisfaction, even though many emotion theorists (e.g. Ortony et al., 1988; Scherer, 1984; Shaver et al., 1987; Watson and Tellegen, 1985; Weiner, 1986) identify satisfaction and dissatisfaction as emotions. Emotion literature conceptualizes dissatisfaction as a "distress" emotion (Ortony et al., 1988), which occurs when an event is perceived as unpleasant or obstructive to goals or needs (Scherer, 1984; Weiner, 1986). That is, dissatisfaction is considered to be a relatively undifferentiated emotion that is nonspecific in the sense that it is a general, valenced reaction to a negative event. For instance, Weiner (1986) depicts dissatisfaction as an outcome-dependent emotion because it is associated with the undesirability of an event, but not with its cause.

In marketing, service encounter dissatisfaction is "distinguished from attitude, overall service satisfaction, and quality based on this narrower, more focused definition" (Bitner and Hubbert, 1994, p. 74). Marketers have been offering various definitions of service encounter satisfaction and dissatisfaction. For instance, Oliver (1996, p. 13) defines satisfaction as "the customer's fulfillment response. It is the judgment that a ... service ... provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment." Spreng, MacKenzie, and Olshavsky (1996, p. 17), on the other hand, define satisfaction as "the emotional reaction to a product or service

experience." These two definitions of satisfaction/dissatisfaction reflect the distinct views of the two main theoretical traditions in conceptualizing satisfaction/dissatisfaction: either as a judgment that is the result of positive and negative emotions, over and above the effect of cognitive antecedents (Mano and Oliver, 1993; Oliver, 1996; Westbrook, 1987); or as a consumption emotion (Day, 1983; Hunt, 1991; Spreng et al., 1988). Nyer (1997b, 1998) provides ample evidence to show that satisfaction (and by implication dissatisfaction) is an emotion. Like emotion research, research in marketing has mainly concentrated on cognitions (or appraisals) associated with dissatisfaction. Cognitions of negative disconfirmation, the underfulfillment of needs, and inequity are associated with customer dissatisfaction (e.g. Mano and Oliver, 1993; Oliver, 1996; Oliver, 2000). Such cognitions, associated with the unexpected, negative outcome of an event, bring about tendencies to seek the source or cause of the negative event (Hastie, 1984; Weiner, 1986).

From these characterizations in marketing and emotion literature we derived the following predictions about the experiential qualities of dissatisfaction. Dissatisfied people have *feelings* "of unfulfillment", *thoughts* "of what they had missed out on", and the *emotivational goal* to "want to find out who or what is responsible for the event."

A pilot study was conducted to provide further details about the experiential content of dissatisfaction. A sample of 36 female and 31 male students from Tilburg University (with a median age of 21) were asked to recount a specific service consumption event that made them experience intense dissatisfaction. The participants were asked to remember an event that was as authentic as possible and to bring back as much of the actual experience as they possibly could. Then they were asked to describe the experience in an open-ended format. Finally, by means of five open-ended questions participants were asked to describe the feelings, thoughts, action tendencies, actions and emotivational goals they had. Three judges, blind to the hypothesis of this study, independently converted participants' answers into response items, compared their formulations and resolved disagreements by discussion. Repeatedly mentioned answers were converted into the following response items for *feelings*; "having an undecided feeling", *thoughts*; "think about how to act upon the situation", *action tendencies*; "feel like waiting for the right moment to take action", and "feel like devoting your attention to something else", *actions*; "reflect on what happened", and "make a deliberate judgment about how to act", and *emotivational goals*; "want to find out what would be the best way to deal with the event." Table 1 provides an overview of predicted dissatisfaction items.

In sum, the literature review and the pilot test suggest that anger and dissatisfaction differ on each of the five response types (thoughts, feelings, action tendencies, actions, and goals) that are assumed to be the central components of an emotional experience. In line with these findings, we expect that anger and dissatisfaction are distinct emotions with an idiosyncratic experiential content. That is, we posit:

H1: Anger and dissatisfaction have a different experiential content with distinctive feelings, thoughts, action tendencies, actions, and emotivational goals.

Method

Procedure. One hundred and twenty second year students (63 male and 57 female students) of International Business Studies at Tilburg University participated as a part of their course requirements. Their age ranged from 18 to 27, with a median of 19. We used retrospective experience sampling as a method. In retrospective experience sampling, a participant is asked to describe his or her experience in response to an autobiographical episode. Next, the participant is asked open- and close-ended questions about this episode. This approach is frequently used in emotion research (Frijda, Kuipers, and Ter Schure, 1989; Roseman, Antoniou and Jose, 1996; Zeelenberg and Pieters, 2004) and it is strongly related to critical incidents research. A noteworthy difference between both methods is that in critical incidents research usually the autobiographical episodes are focused on, whereas in experience sampling the experiences are typically followed by response scales, which are subjected to standard testing. Combinations of both methods have been applied recently (e.g. Ruth et al., 2002).

The procedure we used is very similar to the procedure employed by Roseman et al. (1994), who chose it to reduce the risk of collecting data on emotion language rather than on emotion states. Instead of asking participants about for example the thoughts they believe to be associated with anger, we asked them to report the thoughts they had when they were angry. Participants who are engaged in such a recall procedure spontaneously make emotion faces and expressions for the emotion they are recalling (Matelesta and Izard, 1984). This indicates that not merely emotion language but emotion experience is assessed by this technique.

To sample a wide range of experiences loaded with anger and dissatisfaction, we used two instructions for recalling a negative experience with a service organization. Half of the participants read the anger instruction, and the other half read the dissatisfaction instruction. The exact anger instruction is provided in Appendix A. Apart from the focus on anger or dissatisfaction, both versions of the questionnaire were identical. Participants were assigned at random to each instruction.

Measures. Participants were encouraged to re-experience their negative service experience step-by-step. Then they were asked to describe the event as accurately as possible. Next, we asked how long ago the event had happened. Then, closed-ended questions were asked about the intensity of dissatisfaction and anger. These questions were answered on a nine- point scale with end-points labeled *not at all* (1) and *very much* (9). Following Roseman et al. (1994) we then asked participants about the particular feelings, thoughts, action tendencies, actions and emotivational goals proposed for either anger or dissatisfaction. Each experiential category (feelings, thoughts, action tendencies, actions, emotivational goals) contained four items in random order (two items measuring predicted responses per emotion). Ratings ranged from 1 (not at all) to 9 (very much). Each item was preceded by the stem "*During the event, to what extent did you...*", followed by the items shown in Table 3.1.

Results and Discussion

Negative service experiences. Participants reported a wide variety of negative service experiences. Reported service failures fell in the categories of personal transportation (by train, bus, airplane or taxi), telecommunication, stores, restaurants, education, banking and insurance, repair and utility services, travel agencies, and local government. On average, the negative events that participants reported had happened two months before, with no significant differences in the two versions of the questionnaire.

The intensity of anger and dissatisfaction. The mean intensity of dissatisfaction was 8.01, the mean intensity of anger was 7.18, both on a 9-point scale. An independent samples t test indicated that there were no significant differences in the intensity of dissatisfaction, $t(118) = 1.77$, ns., among the anger and dissatisfaction instruction. Likewise, there were no significant

differences in anger among the anger and dissatisfaction instruction ($t(118) = .85$, ns.). This is desirable since the objective of the two instructions was to collect a wide variety of experiences and not to differentiate in the intensity of the emotions.

The correlation of dissatisfaction and anger was .252 ($p < .006$). A further inspection of the relationship of anger and dissatisfaction revealed that 11.7% of the highly dissatisfied consumers (with a score of 6 to 9 on a 9-point scale) was not (very) angry (score 1 to 4 on a 9-point scale), whereas all the highly angry consumers were also highly dissatisfied. This finding suggests that anger and dissatisfaction do not always co-occur.

Anger and dissatisfaction are distinctive emotions. Study 3.1 was designed to establish if anger and dissatisfaction about a specific service failure differ in their experiential content. Partial correlation analysis was used to examine the strength of the relationship between the experiential content items and respectively, anger and dissatisfaction. This allowed us to assess the association between the experiential content items and one specific emotion, while controlling for the other emotion. The results are summarized in Table 3.1.

In support of the hypothesis that the experiential content of anger and dissatisfaction is different, 14 experiential content items correlated significantly with the correct emotion, and not with the other emotion. That is, all experiential content items that were intended to measure the experience of anger, significantly correlated with anger, and four experiential content items that were intended to measure the experience of dissatisfaction significantly correlated with dissatisfaction. For instance, a feeling like one would explode was significantly correlated with anger ($r = .628$, $p < .001$), but not with dissatisfaction ($r = .150$, $p < .104$). In contrast, a feeling of unfulfillment was significantly correlated with dissatisfaction ($r = .238$, $p < .009$), but not with anger ($r = .062$, $p < .504$). None of the experiential content items correlated significantly with both anger and dissatisfaction. The findings in Table 1 support the hypothesis that the five experiential content categories discriminate between anger and dissatisfaction.

Table 3.1 *Partial Correlation Coefficients of Anger and Dissatisfaction and Response Items; Study 3.1*

Experiential content item	Anger		Dissatisfaction	
	Coefficient	*p*-value	Coefficient	*p*-value
Feelings				
Have a feeling like you'd explode	*.628*	*.000*	.150	.104
Have a feeling of unfulfillment	.062	.504	*.238*	*.009*
Feeling overwhelmed by your emotions	*.447*	*.000*	-.019	.834
Have an undecided feeling	.231	.012	-.080	.387
Thoughts				
Think of violence towards others	*.378*	*.000*	-.040	.666
Think of what you had missed out on	.060	.515	*.184*	*.046*
Think how unfair the situation was	*.440*	*.000*	.018	.848
Think about how to act upon the situation	.251	.006	.032	.734
Action tendencies				
Feel like behaving aggressively	*.437*	*.000*	.064	.491
Feel like waiting for the right moment to take action	.001	.989	.050	.591
Feel like letting yourself go	*.389*	*.000*	.051	.584
Feel like devoting your attention to something else	-.062	.502	-.045	.626
Actions				
Say something nasty	*.339*	*.000*	.138	.135
Reflect on what happened	.439	.000	.136	.141
Complain about what happened	*.262*	*.004*	.127	.169
Make a deliberate judgment how to act	.055	.553	*.242*	*.008*
Emotivational goals: Want to ...				
get back at someone	*.330*	*.000*	-.010	.915
find out what is the best way to deal with the event	.230	.012	.015	.869
Hurt someone	*.257*	*.005*	-.013	.888
find out who or what is responsible for the event	.071	.444	*.260*	*.004*

Note. Italicized items were intended to measure the experience of anger, and the remaining items were intended to measure dissatisfaction. Parameters are partial correlation coefficients, with significance levels of *t*-value. *Italicized* coefficients and *p*-values in bold indicate that significant relationship is in accordance with the predictions. N=120.

Experiencing anger and dissatisfaction. As indicated in Table 3.1, 14 out of 20 predicted differences in the experience of anger and dissatisfaction were supported. In recalled experiences of anger, consumers had a feeling like they would explode and that they were overtaken by their emotions. Customers were thinking of violence and of how unfair the situation was. Whereas they felt like letting go and behaving aggressively, they actually complained and said something nasty. Angry customers wanted to get back at the organization and wanted to hurt someone. In line with our predictions all these items did not correlate with dissatisfaction. These findings emphasize how anger involves confronting and hurting (the business of) the service provider. Anger evidently serves to (try to) discourage the service provider from doing what causes the customer's anger, and to recover the service failure.

Some results were not in line with our predictions. Four experiential content items predicted for dissatisfaction correlated significantly with anger (but not with dissatisfaction). This suggests that we may have mis-specified these distinctive properties for dissatisfaction. Angry consumers reported that they had an undecided feeling, reflected on what had happened, had thoughts about how to act upon the situation, and finally wanted to find out what would be the best way to deal with the event. A possible explanation for the significant relation between anger and 'having thoughts about how to act upon the situation', and 'want to find out what would be the best way to deal with the event' lies in angry customers' repression of innate aggressive tendencies and their search for alternative ways to respond to the situation (cf. Averill, 1982).

In line with our predictions, dissatisfied customers had a feeling of unfulfillment, thought about what they had missed out on, made a deliberate judgment of how to act and wanted to find out who or what is responsible for the event. These items did not correlate with anger. These findings converge with conceptualizations of dissatisfaction in emotion theory, suggesting that dissatisfaction is the customer's general, valenced reaction to a negative event. Our findings indicate that dissatisfaction signals that the outcome of a service encounter is not as good as it was supposed to be. Also, dissatisfied customers attempt to understand why the service failure has occurred. Thus, dissatisfaction may serve to encourage customers to find out what has happened and to examine who or what is responsible for the service failure. The information arising from this causal search may allow customers to effectively manage the situation.

To summarize, Study 3.1 shows that anger and dissatisfaction systematically differ in their experiential content. Anger and dissatisfaction have distinctive thoughts, feelings, action tendencies, actions, and emotivational goals. Although they are conceptually related emotions, they have clearly distinct experiential profiles. The idiosyncratic experiential profiles of anger and dissatisfaction suggest that both emotions might have distinctive effects on customers' behavioral responses to service failure. The finding that anger and dissatisfaction do not always co-occur, illustrates that an empirical examination of the effects of these specific emotions on customers' behavioral responses to service failure is meaningful. Study 3.2, discussed next, was designed to investigate the interrelationships among service encounter dissatisfaction, anger and customers' behavioral responses to service failure in further detail.

Study 3.2: The Consequences of Anger and Dissatisfaction

Study 3.2 investigates the direct effects of service encounter dissatisfaction and anger on customers' behavioral responses to service failure in a field setting. In addition, since both the findings of Study 3.1 and prior research suggest that the interrelationships between CS/D, anger and customers' responses may be more complex than anger and dissatisfaction having indirect effects on customers' responses, other models merit being tested. Specifically, in this study we also test 1) whether anger mediates the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on customers' responses; 2) whether service encounter dissatisfaction mediates the effect of anger on customers' responses; and 3) whether anger moderates the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on customers' responses to service failure. The reasons for selecting these particular models are discussed next. In the model tests, we control for relevant covariates (switching costs and complaint success likelihood) that might potentially bias the results.

Behavioral Responses to Anger and Dissatisfaction

In this study we investigate the effects of anger and dissatisfaction on negative WOM, complaint behavior, third-party complaining, and switching. Negative WOM entails telling friends and other members of one's social network about a negative service encounter and advising them not to acquire the services of the organization involved. Complaint behavior refers to consumer-initiated communications to the service provider to obtain remedy or restitution for problems in particular market transactions. Third-party complaint behavior is directed toward objects that are external to the consumer's social circle and not directly related to the dissatisfying experience, such as newspapers and legal agencies (Singh, 1988). Switching refers not only to the actual termination of the relationship, but also to the commitment to stay with the service provider (Oliver, 1996).

Numerous studies on the effect of CS/D on customers' behavioral responses to service failure indicate that service encounter dissatisfaction is a significant predictor of negative WOM, complaint behavior, third-party complaining, and switching (e.g. Maute and Forrester, 1993; Richins, 1987; Singh, 1988). However, few studies have investigated the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on customers' responses while controlling for anger. Since anger is related to dissatisfaction (e.g., Folkes et al., 1987), estimations of the impact of

dissatisfaction on customers' responses may be biased when anger is not controlled for. The few studies that assess the impact of dissatisfaction while controlling for anger provide mixed evidence on the effect of dissatisfaction on customers' responses. Whereas Dubé and Maute (1996) find that dissatisfaction is related to behavioral intentions, Díaz and Ruíz (2002) find that dissatisfaction is unrelated to behavioral intentions while controlling for anger. In view of these diverging findings, possibly caused by the use of different measures, more research is needed to understand the impact of dissatisfaction on customers' behavioral responses while controlling for anger.

The findings of Study 3.1 provide reasons to believe that service encounter dissatisfaction is unrelated to customers' behavioral responses to service failure when anger is controlled for. Recall that Study 3.1 shows that dissatisfaction is a relatively undifferentiated, outcome dependent emotion and that dissatisfied customers attempt to find out why the service failure has occurred. As a result of this information-seeking response, customers may hold the service provider, themselves or uncontrollable circumstances responsible for the service failure. Prior research indicates that when a service failure is attributable to the customer, firms are not expected to provide remedy or restitution. Also, when customers blame themselves for a service failure, they are less likely to tell others about the negative event. In contrast, when a service failure is attributable to the service provider, customers are more likely to engage in complaint behavior and negative WOM (Folkes, 1988; Richins, 1983). Since the information about who or what is responsible can still identify either the service provider, the self, or uncontrollable circumstances as responsible for the service failure, we expect no clear correlation between service encounter dissatisfaction and customers' behavioral responses to service failure. That is, the experience of dissatisfaction *per se* may be insufficient to motivate customers to engage in complaint behavior, negative WOM, or switching. We hypothesize:

H2a: Service encounter dissatisfaction does not affect customers' behavioral responses to service failure, when anger is controlled for.

Anger is "one of the most powerful emotions, if we consider its profound impact on social relations as well as effects on the person experiencing this emotion" (Lazarus, 1991, p.217). It is related to aggression and hostile behavior (Averill, 1982, Berkowitz, 1990).

Consequently, anger may be a powerful predictor of customers' behavioral responses to failed service encounters, over and above the effect of dissatisfaction. A considerable amount of empirical evidence suggests that anger may be related to customers' responses to service failure. Prior research on the effect of anger on customers' behavioral intentions shows that when anger increases, customers are more likely to complain and to engage in negative WOM, and less likely to repurchase the product or service (Folkes et al., 1987; Nyer, 1997a). Other research suggests that anger is a significant predictor of complaint intentions, and intentions to engage in negative WOM, even when satisfaction is controlled for (Casado-Díaz and Mas-Ruíz, 2002; Dubé and Maute, 1996). In line with these findings, we propose that anger has a significant direct effect on customers' responses to service failure, when dissatisfaction is controlled for. The findings of Study 3.1 provide additional support for this contention. Study 3.1 shows that angry customers are motivated to say something nasty and to complain. What's more, angry customers have several possibilities to attain the goals of getting back at the service provider and hurting business, including negative WOM, legal action, and switching. Thus, prior research and the findings of Study 3.1 indicate that:

H2b: Anger has a positive effect on customers' behavioral responses to service failure, when dissatisfaction is controlled for.

H2a and H2b relate to the direct, independent effects of anger and service encounter dissatisfaction on customers' behavioral responses to failed service encounters. However, there are reasons to expect more complex interrelationships between anger, service encounter dissatisfaction, and customers' responses. Building on emotion theory and the findings of Study 3.1 we propose that service encounter dissatisfaction is antecedent to, and necessary for anger. In other words, we expect that anger mediates the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on customers' behavioral responses to failed service encounters.

Recall that Study 3.1 shows that anger and dissatisfaction produce a whole repertoire of different responses aimed at restoring the disturbed relationship with the situation. The findings on the emotional experience of dissatisfaction are in line with conceptualizations of dissatisfaction as an outcome-dependent emotion that is associated with the undesirability of an event, but not with its cause (cf. Ortony et al., 1988; Weiner, 1986). The findings of Study 3.1 demonstrate that dissatisfaction signals that the service encounter was not as good as it

was supposed to be, and that it triggers an information-seeking response. The information arising from this information-seeking response may clarify who or what is to blame for the service failure. Consequently, other, more differentiated emotions such as anger may arise. If customers hold the service provider responsible for the service failure anger may arise. Likewise, guilt and shame may arise if customers hold themselves responsible for the service failure, and sadness may result if customers hold circumstances beyond anyone's control responsible for the service failure (cf. Roseman et al., 1996). That service encounter dissatisfaction is an antecedent of more differentiated emotions, such as anger, is in line with the reasoning of some emotion theorists such as Scherer (1982) and Weiner (1986). For instance, Weiner (p. 121) argues that:

> Following the outcome of an event, there is initially a general positive or negative reaction (a "primitive" emotion) based on the perceived success or failure of that outcome (the "primary" appraisal). (...) Following the appraisal of the outcome, a causal ascription will be sought if that outcome was unexpected and/or important. A different set of emotions is then generated by the chosen attributions.

This suggests a temporal sequence in which cognitions may enter into the emotion process consecutively to further refine and differentiate the emotion experience. In sum, we propose that service encounter dissatisfaction is necessary for, and antecedent to anger. The combination of this last proposition, H2a, and H2b results in the following hypothesis:

> *H3*: Anger mediates the relationship between service encounter dissatisfaction and customers' behavioral responses to service failure.

Alternative conceptualizations of the relationship between anger and dissatisfaction. In addition to a model with anger as a mediator of the relationship between dissatisfaction and behavioral responses, various alternative possibilities exist to model the interrelationships between dissatisfaction, anger, and customers' responses. Based on prior research findings and the findings of Study 3.1 we offer two possible alternative models: (1) a model with service encounter dissatisfaction as a mediator of the relationship between anger and customers' responses, and (2) a model with anger as a moderator of the relationship between

service encounter dissatisfaction and customers' responses. Both alternative models are discussed next.

In a seminal study on the effects of positive and negative affect on satisfaction and customers' responses to service failure, Westbrook (1987) shows that satisfaction is a partial mediator of negative affect (involving anger, disgust, and contempt) on complaint behavior and word-of-mouth. Since then the common view in marketing is that specific emotions like anger, sadness, and regret contribute to CS/D (e.g. Mano and Oliver, 1993; Oliver, 2000). However, note that Westbrook (1987) measures anger at a lower level of abstraction (a particular service encounter) than dissatisfaction (accumulated satisfaction with a service provider or summary satisfaction). In contrast, in the present research, anger and dissatisfaction are measured at the same level of abstraction (i.e., they have the same object, namely the service encounter). Therefore, hypothesis 3 is not necessarily in disagreement with the findings of Westbrook. Nevertheless, since other authors building on Westbrook's study have argued that positive and negative emotions are "clearly antecedent to, and necessary for satisfaction" (measured on the same level of abstraction) (Mano and Oliver, 1993, p. 454), we test an alternative model in which service encounter dissatisfaction mediates the effect of anger on customers' behavioral responses.

A second alternative model is that anger might moderate the effect of dissatisfaction on customers' behavioral responses. Study 3.1 provides some support for such a model. Recall that Study 3.1 showed that angry customers were dissatisfied, but that dissatisfied customers were not necessarily angry. This finding is in line with the contention that anger mediates the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on behavioral responses (hypothesis 3). However, this finding may also suggest that service encounter dissatisfaction and anger interact in their effect on customers' behavioral responses to service failure. In this case, there would be no temporal sequence between dissatisfaction and anger: dissatisfaction would be the result of the customer's *focus* on the negative event, whereas anger would result from a *focus* on both the negative event and the blameworthiness of the service provider's actions (whether a customer on any particular occasion focuses on the event or on both the event and the blameworthiness is a separate issue, cf. Ortony et al, 1988). Thus, anger is presumed to moderate the relationship between service encounter dissatisfaction and customers' behavioral responses. That is, the relationship between dissatisfaction and behavioral responses would be stronger among the more angry customers. To examine this relationship, we test a second

alternative model in which anger moderates the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on customers' behavioral responses to service failure.

Covariates in the model. While the variables of key interest are anger and dissatisfaction, in our analyses we control for variables that might potentially bias our results: complaint success likelihood and switching costs. Higher levels of complaint success likelihood are associated with higher levels of complaint behavior (Singh and Wilkes, 1996). Switching costs are negatively associated with actual switching (Ping, 1993). Switching costs and complaint success likelihood are possibly related to anger. That is, higher switching costs and lower levels of complaint success likelihood may increase the feelings of frustration that angry customers already have. Therefore, not including these related variables in the model might bias estimations of the impact of anger and dissatisfaction on behavioral responses.

Method

Participants and procedure. A sample of 146 undergraduate psychology students from Tilburg University participated in this study as a part of a course requirement. 108 females and 38 males, ranging in age from 18 to 32, with a median age of 20, were asked to recall an earlier negative experience with a service organization. Retrospective experience sampling was used to collect a wide variety of negative experiences with service organizations. There were two instructions, one focusing on anger, the other on dissatisfaction.

Measures. Service encounter dissatisfaction and anger were measured with 7-point, multi-item scales adapted from previous studies (Crosby and Stephens, 1987; Izard, 1977). The scales were introduced with the following question: "*How did you feel about your service experience on this particular occasion?*." Complaint success likelihood (Singh, 1988), with end-points labeled "very unlikely" and "very likely" and switching costs (Ping, 1993), with end-points anchored by "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree" were also assessed on 7-point scales. Scales measuring customers' behavioral responses closely followed existing scales measuring reactions to service failure. Negative WOM (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1996), complaint behavior (Swan and Oliver, 1989), third-party complaint behavior (Singh, 1988), and switching (Oliver, 1996) were assessed by having participants

Table 3.2 *Scales and Scale Items; Study 3.2*

Anger (α = .921)
Enraged
Angry
Mad
Dissatisfaction (α = .692)
Dissatisfied
Displeased
Discontented
Negative WOM (α = .690)
Say negative things about the service provider to other people
Recommend the service provider to someone who seeks your advice (-)
Discourage friends and relatives to do business with the service provider
Complaint Behavior (α = .903)
Complain to the service provider about the service quality
Ask the service provider to take care of the problem
Complain to the service provider about the way I was treated
Discuss the problem with the service provider
Third-party Complaint Behavior (α = .805)
Complain to a consumer agency and ask them to make the service provider take care of the problem
Write a letter to a local newspaper about your bad experience
Report to a consumer agency so that they can warn other consumers
Take some legal action against the service provider
Switching (α = .860)
I use the services of this service provider because it is the best choice for me
To me, the service quality this service provider offers is higher than the service quality of other service providers
I have grown to like this service provider more than other service providers in this category
This service provider is my preferred service provider in this category
I have acquired the services of this organization less frequently than before
I have switched to a competitor of the service organization
I will not acquire services of this organization anymore in the future
I intend to switch to a competitor of the service organization in the future
Complaint Success Likelihood (α = .733)
At the moment of the service failure, how likely was it that the service provider would…
…take appropriate action to take care of your problem if you would report the incident
…solve your problem and give better service to you in the future if you would report the incident
…be more careful in the future and everyone would benefit if you would report the incident
Switching costs (α =. 921)
All things considered, I would lose a lot in changing service providers
Generally speaking, the costs in time, effort, and grief to switch service providers would be high
It is very easy to switch service providers (-)

Note. (-) indicates that items were reverse coded.

indicate the degree to which they engaged in such behavior on a 7-point scale, anchored by "not at all" and "very much." Scale items and reliabilities are presented in table 2. Note that the reliability coefficients of dissatisfaction (α = .692) and negative WOM (α = .690) have a relatively low yet acceptable value.

Results

Negative service experiences. Participants reported negative experiences with a wide variety of service providers. Their responses can be categorized as bad experiences with (virtual) stores, personal transport, bars and restaurants, telecommunication, banking and insurance, hospitals and physicians, entertainment and hospitality, (local) government and the police, repair and utility services, property-owners, driving schools and travel agencies. On average, participants reported events that had happened two months before, with no significant differences between the two versions of the questionnaire.

The intensity of anger and dissatisfaction. The mean intensity of dissatisfaction was 5.93, and 5.01 for anger, measured on 7-point scales. There were no significant differences in the intensity of both dissatisfaction and anger between the two instructions. The correlation between anger and dissatisfaction was .510, $p < .001$. Replicating our findings from Study 3.1, 15.8% of the very dissatisfied consumers was not (very) angry, whereas all of the very angry consumers were also very dissatisfied.

Discriminant validity of anger and dissatisfaction constructs. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to examine the discriminant validity of the anger and dissatisfaction constructs. The analyses indicated that the overall fit of a two-factor structure (with the three anger-items loading on anger and the three dissatisfaction-items loading on dissatisfaction) fitted the data well ($p = .416$, RMSEA =.001). The GFI (.985), AGFI (.954), and NFI (.985) all exceeded the recommended value of .900. On the other hand, a rival one-factor model (with all the items loading on one latent variable) did not fit the data well ($p < .001$, RMSEA =.139). The GFI (.935), AGFI (0.830), and NFI (.930) were all lower than in the two-factor model. A χ^2 difference test showed that the two-factor model clearly outperformed the one-factor model. The χ^2 for the two-factor model was 24.18 lower than the χ^2 for the rival, one-factor model, while using 1 degree of freedom, a significantly better fit, even at $p = .01$. These results provide empirical support for the contention that anger and dissatisfaction are distinctive constructs.

Direct effects of anger and dissatisfaction on behavioral responses. To examine the direct effect of service encounter dissatisfaction, anger and the covariates on different behavioral responses, we performed seemingly unrelated regression (SUR) analysis using the program Stata 7.0 (StataCorp, 1999). Seemingly unrelated regression was used because the error terms of the equations are possibly correlated. Treating the equations as a collection of separate relationships will be suboptimal when drawing inferences about the model's parameters (Srivastava and Giles, 1987).

The data were analyzed in two steps. In step 1, we examined the effect of dissatisfaction on customers' behavioral responses without including anger as a predictor in any of the models. This allowed us to compare our results with previous studies on the effect of dissatisfaction on behavioral responses that did not include anger as a predictor variable. In step 2, anger was entered as a predictor. At this point we examined the relative effects of dissatisfaction and anger on customers' behavioral responses. The results of the analyses are presented in Table 3.

The results of the step 1-regressions were largely in line with previous research (e.g., Maute and Forrester, 1993; Richins, 1987; Singh, 1988). Service encounter dissatisfaction was a significant predictor of switching, negative WOM and complaint behavior. The effect of dissatisfaction on third-party complaint behavior was not significant. Complaint success likelihood had a positive effect on complaining, whereas switching costs had a negative effect on switching.

Hypothesis 2a was partially supported. In the step 2 model, where we controlled for anger, dissatisfaction was no longer a significant predictor of complaint behavior and negative WOM. The impact of dissatisfaction on switching decreased, but remained significant.

In summary, the foregoing analyses reveal that service encounter dissatisfaction is not directly related to complaint behavior, negative WOM, and third-party complaint behavior when anger is accounted for. In contrast, anger is a significant predictor of customers' behavioral responses to service failure when service encounter dissatisfaction is accounted for. Next, we will proceed with a more detailed examination of the interrelationships between service encounter dissatisfaction, anger, and customers' behavioral responses.

Table 3.3 *Impact of Anger, Dissatisfaction, and Covariates on Customers' Behavioral Responses; Study 3.2*

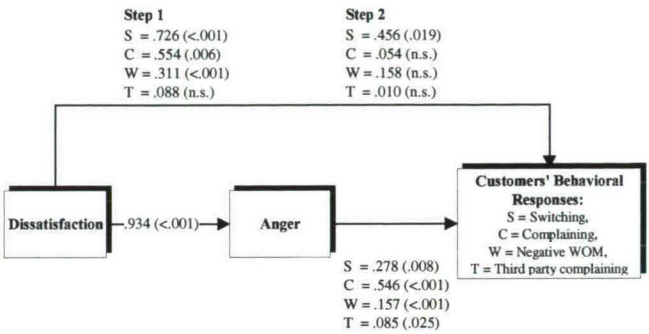
	Switching		Complaining		Negative WOM		Third-party complaining	
	Coefficient	*p*-value	Coefficient	*p*-value	Coefficient	*p*-value	Coefficient	*p*-value
Step 1 model, not including anger								
Constant	3.081	.054	7.373	.001	7.638	< .001	1.854	.003
Covariates								
Switching costs	-.673	< .001	-	-	-	-	-	-
Complaint success likelihood	-	-	.545	< .001	-	-	-	-
Predictor								
Dissatisfaction	.726	< .001	.554	.006	.311	< .001	.088	.112
Step 2 model, including anger								
Constant	.809	.387	3.212	.093	6.350	< .001	1.258	.043
Covariates								
Switching costs	- .701	< .001	-	-	-	-	-	-
Complaint success likelihood	-	-	.585	< .001	-	-	-	-
Predictors								
Dissatisfaction	.456	.019	.054	.409	.158	.082	.010	.452
Anger	.278	.008	.546	< .001	.157	< .001	.085	.025
Step 2 model fit								
R^2 (p-value)	.490 (< .001)		.218 (< .001)		.185 (<.001)		.036 (.067)	
ΔR^2 (step 2 – step 1)	.032		.102		.041		.035	

Note. Parameters are unstandardized regression weights, with significance levels of *t*-values. One-sided tests. *N*= 146. - = Not applicable.

Anger as a mediator of the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on behavioral responses. To test the hypothesis that anger mediates the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on customers' responses (hypothesis 3) three regression models were estimated, following Baron and Kenny (1986): *model 1*, regressing anger on dissatisfaction; *model 2*, regressing customers' responses on dissatisfaction; and *model 3*, regressing customers' responses on both anger and dissatisfaction. Separate coefficients for each equation were estimated and tested. To establish mediation the following conditions must hold: dissatisfaction must impact anger; dissatisfaction must be shown to impact customers' responses in model 2; and anger must affect customers' responses in model 3 (while controlling for dissatisfaction). If these conditions all hold in the predicted direction, then the effect of dissatisfaction on customers' responses must be less in model 3 than in model 2. Perfect mediation holds if dissatisfaction has no effect when the effect of anger is controlled for (model 3).

In the first regression model (model 1) dissatisfaction was a significant predictor of anger (unstandardized coefficient = .934; SE = .137; p-value < .001). The step 1 regressions (model 2) as depicted in Table 3 indicated that dissatisfaction affected switching, complaint behavior, and negative WOM. The effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on third-party complaining was not significant. Anger was a significant predictor of switching, complaint behavior, and negative WOM when dissatisfaction was controlled for (model 3). The effect of dissatisfaction on all these responses was less in the step 2 model than in the step 1 model. Thus, all conditions for mediation were met, for switching, complaint behavior, and negative WOM. The results of the mediational analyses are summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 3.1 *Mediational Effects of Anger on Customers' Behavioral Responses; Study 3.2*



Note. Parameters are unstandardized regression weights, with *p*-values between parentheses. Step 1 = effect of dissatisfaction on customers' behavioral responses; Step 2 = effect of dissatisfaction on customers' behavioral responses, while controlling for anger.

Follow-up analyses were performed to test for the indirect effect of dissatisfaction on these responses via anger. Baron and Kenny (1986) provide an approximate significance test for the indirect effect of dissatisfaction on customers' responses. The path from dissatisfaction to anger is denoted as a and its standard error s_a; the path from anger to behavioral responses is denoted as b and its standard error s_b. The product ab is the estimate of the indirect effect of dissatisfaction on behavioral responses through anger. The standard error of ab is:

$$SE_{ab} = \sqrt{b^2 s_a^2 + a^2 s_b^2 + s_a^2 s_b^2}$$

The ratio ab/SE_{ab} can be interpreted as a z-statistic. Indirect effects of dissatisfaction on behavioral responses were significant for switching (2.27, $p < .05$), for complaint behavior (3.66, $p < .01$) and negative WOM (2.44, $p < .05$).

In summary, the foregoing analyses suggest that the effects of service encounter dissatisfaction on complaint behavior and negative WOM are completely mediated by anger, whereas the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on switching is partially mediated by anger. Service encounter dissatisfaction was unrelated to third party complaining. Thus, one of the steps to establish that anger mediates between service encounter dissatisfaction and third-party complaining was not met.

Test of alternative models. The conditions for mediation were not met in any of the alternative models with service encounter dissatisfaction as a mediator of the effect of anger on customers' responses. Recall that the step 2 analyses (Table 3) indicated that dissatisfaction was unrelated to complaint behavior, third-party complaining, and negative WOM, when anger was controlled for. Therefore, one of the conditions to establish that dissatisfaction mediates the effect of anger on complaint behavior, third-party complaining, and negative WOM was not met – the mediator does not affect the outcome variable. As for the model with dissatisfaction as a mediator of the effect of anger on switching, a significance test of the indirect effect of anger on switching yielded an insignificant result (1.16, ns.). This result indicates that the mediated effect equals zero in the population. To summarize, no support is found for an alternative model with dissatisfaction as a mediator of the effect of anger on customers' behavioral responses to service failure.

Next, the second alternative model with anger as a moderator of the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on behavioral responses was tested. Moderated regression analysis (Sharma, Durand, and Gur-Arie, 1981) was used to test a model with anger as a moderator of the effect of dissatisfaction on customers' behavioral responses to service failure. Three regression equations were examined for equality of the regression coefficients: Model A, with dissatisfaction as a predictor of behavioral responses; Model B, with dissatisfaction and anger as predictors; Model C, with dissatisfaction, anger, and an anger x dissatisfaction interaction term as predictors of behavioral responses.

For anger to be a pure moderator on behavioral responses, model A and model B should not be different from each other, but they should be different from model C, with the latter model having the best fit. For anger to be classified as a quasi-moderator, model A, B, and C should be different from each other (cf. Sharma et al., 1981).

Recall that the step 2 regressions (with Dissatisfaction and Anger as predictors) were significantly superior to the step 1 regressions (with Dissatisfaction as a predictor) for all the behavioral responses. Thus models A and B are different from each other. In contrast, model C (with dissatisfaction, anger, and an anger x dissatisfaction interaction term as predictors) was *not* superior to model B for switching $F(1,142) = -1.54$, ns., complaining; $F(1,142) = 2.64$, ns., and negative WOM; $F(1,143) = -.32$, ns.. Since dissatisfaction had no significant effect on third-party complaining (in either model 1 or 2), model C was not tested for this specific post-consumption response. These findings indicate that anger does not moderate the effect of dissatisfaction on customers' behavioral responses to service failure.

Jointly, the analyses lend support for the proposition that anger mediates the relationship between service encounter dissatisfaction and customers' responses to service failure. Anger was found to be a full mediator for complaint behavior and negative WOM, and a partial mediator for switching. No support was found for an alternative model with service encounter dissatisfaction as a mediator of the effect of anger on customers' responses, or for a model with anger as a moderator of the relationship between service encounter dissatisfaction and customers' responses.

General Discussion

Theoretical Implications

Two studies explored the experience and consequences of anger and dissatisfaction in response to failed service encounters. Study 3.1 showed that anger and dissatisfaction have an idiosyncratic experiential content, indicating that they are qualitatively different emotions. As we predicted, in recalled experiences of anger, customers had a feeling that they would explode and that they were overtaken by their emotions. Angry customers were thinking of violence and how unfair the situation was. Whereas they felt like letting themselves go and behaving aggressively, they actually complained and said something nasty. They wanted to get back at the organization and wanted to hurt someone. In contrast, dissatisfied customers had a feeling of unfulfillment, thought about what they had missed out on, made a deliberate judgment of how to act and wanted to find out who or what was responsible for the event.

In sum, dissatisfaction signals that a service encounter was not as good as it was supposed to be and triggers an information-seeking response. Thus, dissatisfied customers may attempt to find out why the service failure has occurred. Angry customers have already identified who or what is responsible for a service failure (Folkes et al., 1987; Ruth et al., 2002). Anger may serve to discourage the service provider from doing what causes the anger and to recover the service failure.

The results of Study 3.1 build on prior research (Ruth et al., 2002) showing that anger is associated with appraisals of high service provider control over the failed service encounter. For instance, note that angry customers want to hurt someone and want to get back at someone, suggesting that they hold someone else, that is the service provider, accountable for the service failure. Like this, the findings of Study 3.1 relate to, but go beyond appraisals by

providing information on a wide range of specific responses associated with the experience of anger and dissatisfaction.

As hypothesized, the analyses of Study 3.2 revealed that dissatisfaction was not directly related to complaint behavior, negative WOM, and third-party complaining. In contrast, and also in support of our hypotheses, anger was a significant predictor of customers' behavioral responses to service failure. Accordingly, the results of Study 3.2 indicate that focusing on specific emotions increases insights into the behavior that customers engage in after a service failure. In a recent study, Zeelenberg and Pieters (2004) find differential effects of regret and disappointment on customers' behavioral responses. We extend these findings by revealing distinctive effects of anger and dissatisfaction on customers' behavioral responses to service failure. The results of Study 3.2 support the proposition of Bagozzi et al. (1999, p. 201) that:

> The implications of emotional reactions in purchase situations on complaint behaviors, word-of-mouth communication, repurchase, and related actions may differ for various positive and negative emotions and be of more relevance than reactions to satisfaction or dissatisfaction, per se.

The findings of Study 3.2 go beyond this by showing that anger is a full mediator of the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on negative WOM and complaint behavior, and a partial mediator of the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on switching. These findings are new and appear to be in contrast with earlier work, where CS/D mediates the relationship between specific emotions (such as anger, shame, and guilt) and behavioral responses (Westbrook, 1987). Thus, it is appropriate to examine this study more closely to reconcile its findings with our own. Westbrook (1987, p. 260) argues that, "as a *global* evaluative judgment about product usage/ consumption (...), satisfaction judgments logically should be determined at least in part by the occurrence of product related affective responses" (italics added). He also points out that "past affective responses may be available to exert effects on the evaluative processes yielding satisfaction judgments" (p. 260), which demonstrates that he refers to *summary* satisfaction, the customer's overall satisfaction with a firm. On the other hand, affective responses (like anger) relate to one *specific service encounter* or transaction. Thus, the object of satisfaction is more general than the object of affective responses like anger. For instance, Westbrook reports that for cable pay television (one of the two product categories studied) anger was typically associated with service interruptions, installation problems, and

billing errors. In such a case, indeed *summary* satisfaction (the consumer's overall feelings toward the service provider) may be a (partial) mediator of the effect of *transaction specific* negative affects (involving anger, disgust, and contempt) on complaint behavior and word-of-mouth. In our study, dissatisfaction and anger were both measured at the level of the service encounter. The findings of Study 3.2 suggest that when they are both measured at the level of the service encounter (and thus at the same level), anger mediates the effect of dissatisfaction on customers' behavioral responses. Of course, future research is needed to further test the extent to which the mediational effects of specific emotions depend on their level of abstraction.

As regards the implications of the current findings, we do not believe that our results indicate that the traditional approach to model the impact of CS/D and related consumption emotions should be abandoned. Clearly, the appropriate level of abstraction of CS/D and related emotions depends on the specific research questions. However, we do believe that in future research it is important to be explicit about the level of abstraction at which CS/D and related consumption emotions are conceptualized and measured. This may further clarify the interrelationships between various levels of CS/D, consumption emotions and behavioral responses to service failure. Our results indicate that when measured in response to a specific event, anger and dissatisfaction are distinct emotions, with dissatisfaction being antecedent to, and necessary for, anger.

Managerial Implications

The present study has several managerial implications. Satisfaction surveys are commonly used by organizations to determine the extent to which their customers are satisfied and the extent to which this influences customer behavior. We found that transaction specific dissatisfaction is not directly related to complaint behavior, negative WOM and third-party complaint behavior, whereas anger is a significant predictor of customers' behavioral responses to service failure. Because a dissatisfied customer is not necessarily angry, it is important to measure specific emotions in post-purchase customer surveys. Measuring only dissatisfaction, even at its most extreme levels, may not be sufficient to explain and predict customers' behavioral responses. Measuring different specific emotions should enable management to make better predictions about customer behavior, and eventually about service profitability.

Note that dissatisfaction was found to be a significant predictor of switching, even when anger was accounted for. This finding suggests that in some cases, mere service failures and associated feelings of unfulfillment may be sufficient reasons for customers to switch from one service provider to another.

The results of this research show that anger is a significant predictor of switching, complaint behavior, negative WOM, and third-party complaining. Our findings support the intuitive notion that service providers should try to keep customers from getting angry. However, the intangible and inseparable nature of services will inevitably bring about anger at one time or another, despite the best intentions of the service providers. In such circumstances, managing the emotions of angry customers and the behavior that is instigated by them becomes crucial.

Whereas most dissatisfied customers generally do not bother to complain, angry customers exhibit a whole repertoire of different responses aimed at discouraging the service provider from doing what causes one's anger, or to recover the service failure. The wide variety of specific management training on dealing with angry customers suggests (see for instance www.justsell.com, www.mtctraining.com, www.salesvantage.com) that marketing management is very sensitive to this issue. For several reasons, training service staff to recognize and cope with anger in customers may be profitable for service organizations.

Service organizations may benefit from *recognizing* angry customers' responses, since this may be an important first step in improving their performance, as it provides them with the opportunity to respond directly. Since angry customers may express their feelings in negative, (verbally) aggressive ways, developing skills to *cope* with angry customers' responses may help service staff to remain in control of themselves and the situation. Managerial literature about dealing with angry customers emphasizes the importance of acknowledging what the angry customer is saying and feeling, before acting on what the customer is complaining about and resolving the problem (e.g., Riley, 2002). It is critical that *service recovery efforts* are forceful and effective. As angry consumers are emotionally heavily involved in the service, they are often more satisfied or dissatisfied with service recovery efforts than with the service failure itself. In consequence, failed service recoveries are a major source of switching (Smith and Bolton, 2002).

Limitations and Future Research

This research has two important limitations, which may both stimulate future research. We will first address these limitations. Next we will present additional avenues for future research.

The use of retrospective experience sampling may have inflated the explained variance in our models due to self-generated validity (Feldman and Lynch, 1988). Additionally, the use of retrospective experience sampling may be a limitation of both studies because actual consumer information processing may differ from the recollection of processing. Despite a potential bias in recall, we chose this method because in real life, consumer decisions are often also memory-based. Memory data are the basis for many behavioral responses, as consumers are more likely to relate to memories of their prior experiences than to the actual experience itself. Moreover, retrospective experience sampling allows for the collection of data across a wide variety of service events in a structured way, which adds to the external validity of the findings. For these reasons, retrospective experience sampling has been successfully applied in basic and applied emotion research. Still, work in which (mild) forms of anger are experimentally induced is needed to determine the exact chains of causality as investigated in Study 3.2.

The use of students as participants may be a second limitation of both studies. The range of service experiences of students may be relatively small. Therefore concerns regarding the generalizability of the findings to other service experiences and/or events are justified. On the other hand, anger is not induced by an event itself, but by the appraisal of an event. Therefore, we do not expect that the likelihood that students may have reported a smaller range of experiences than other consumers affects the external validity of our findings. Future research can further elucidate this issue. The use of students as participants may also have led to an age-related phenomenology of anger, and/or age-related responses to anger. It appears that older people report lower anger and that age- and life course differences in work- and family-status, social and personal circumstances influence the relationship between age and anger (Schieman, 1999). Future research is needed to validate our findings across a wider sample base.

A third area for future research concerns the experiential content of emotions. Our results show that the experiential content of emotions may help marketers to differentiate and conceptualize emotions. What's more, the experiential qualities of emotions are evidently helpful in developing hypotheses on the behavioral consequences of specific

emotions. Therefore, more research on the experiential content of consumption emotions is needed. More specifically, future research on indicators for the five response types of dissatisfaction may further our knowledge on the phenomenology of this emotion. Although a number of predicted responses for dissatisfaction were supported, other predictions were not.

Fourth, in this research we have used insights in the experience of anger and dissatisfaction to develop hypotheses on the direct and indirect effects of these emotions on behavioral responses to service failure. In Study 3.1, we have chosen the experiential content approach to differentiate emotions, since emotional experience is the proximal cause of (customer) behavior. The results of Study 3.1 were used to develop hypotheses for Study 3.2. However, appraisal outcomes (or attribution outcomes) as antecedents of emotional experience may also be (indirectly) related to customers' behavioral responses. Therefore, future research on the chain of events (appraisal → emotional experience → behavioral responses) that make up the emotion process may further advance the insights into consumer behavior. Interestingly, to date, even basic emotion research has not examined this sequence empirically.

Finally, we find that anger is a significant predictor of customers' behavioral responses over and above the effect of dissatisfaction. Whereas there has been ample research on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, our knowledge of anger is still rather limited. Prior research provides important insights into the antecedents and consequences of anger in consumption settings. For consumer behavior theory, it is important to gain further insight into the ways that consumers cope with anger during the service encounter and into the consequences of this behavior. Results from such research efforts may help service organizations to respond adequately to one of the most powerful emotions. The importance of such research is underlined by the findings of the present study that indicate that angry customers don't come back, but get back.

Appendix A

Anger Instruction: Study 3.1

This study is part of a larger project on the emotions that people experience. The questionnaire is about a *consumption experience* with a service organization that made you feel the emotion *anger*. Service organizations do things for you in exchange for money. Examples of service organizations are restaurants, cafés, travel agencies, shoemakers, banks, airlines and public transport companies. Supermarkets, department stores, bakeries and other retailers are also service organizations because they help you to choose from a variety of products. Other examples of service organizations are schools, hospitals, the police, and telecommunication companies. This listing can be expanded endlessly.

The questionnaire has several parts that will be introduced on every occasion. There are no right or wrong answers; we are interested in your personal opinion. All information will be treated strictly confidential and will be processed anonymously.

We now ask you to recount a specific consumption experience with a service organization that made you feel intense *anger*. In a moment we will ask you to describe the experience and after that to answer some questions about the experience. Try to remember an experience that is as authentic as possible. Try to bring back as much of the actual feeling as you possibly can. This may work best if you first think about the experience, then, write down the highlights, and then try to re-experience it with as much real feeling and intensity as when it first actually happened.

4

Thoughts Far Sweeter Than Slow-Dripping Honey? The Effect of Revenge Fantasies on Customers' Emotions and Behavioral Intentions.

A woman visits a hairdresser. She wants to have her hair cut because her daughter is going to get married in a few days. She gets in the chair, explains what she wants, and has a petty conversation with the hairdresser during the next 45 minutes. When the hairdresser is finished the woman has a new haircut. However, she does not like it at all. The woman is angry with the hairdresser because he did not cut her hair the way she asked him to. When she expresses her discontentment to the hairdresser, he informs her that there is not much that he can do about the haircut, and he offers to give her a discount. However, a discount hardly compensates for showing up on your daughter's wedding with a bad haircut, and it makes this customer even angrier than before. The woman leaves the shop in an angry state informing the store personnel that they have not seen the last of her.

Distinct emotions have distinctive emotional goals associated with them. Examples of emotional goals include wanting to avoid danger in case of fear, and wanting to get a second chance in case of regret (Roseman et al., 1994). Angry consumers typically want to get back at the target of their anger (Chapter 3, this dissertation), as illustrated by the opening example. Averill has even argued that "the desire to gain revenge on, or to get back at the instigator of anger can almost be taken as a definition of anger" (1982, p. 178). Aristotle (trans. 1941) emphasizes the close relationship between anger and a desire for revenge in his definition of anger. For Aristotle (p. 1378) anger is:

> an impulse, accompanied by pain, to a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight directed without justification towards what concerns oneself or what concerns one's friends – it must always be felt towards some particular individual. It must always be attended by a certain pleasure – that which arises from the expectation of revenge – it has been well said about wrath that "it is far sweeter than slow-dripping honey, clouding the hearts of men like smoke." It is also attended by a certain pleasure because the thoughts dwell upon the act of vengeance, and the images then called up are pleasure, like the images called up in dreams.

The desire for vengeance is often accompanied by vivid thoughts or fantasies about the harm that will be inflicted on the target (compare Aristotle, trans. 1941; Frijda, 1993; Tripp and Bies, 1997). The general purpose of this chapter is to explore the effects of revenge fantasies on consumers' emotions and behavioral intentions.

Anecdotic evidence suggests that revenge fantasies *reduce* angry feelings and associated detrimental behavior (Ornstein, 1999; Tripp and Bies, 1997). These findings are interesting because they are in contrast with associative network theory. Associative network theory suggests that revenge fantasies, because of both their focus, which is to make the object of revenge suffer, and their nature, which is often violent and aggressive, will actually *increase* angry feelings and associated behavioral tendencies. For that reason, follow-up research is needed to corroborate the foregoing, exploratory research findings of Ornstein and Tripp and Bies. The relevance of this topic for marketers lies in the close relation between consumers' goals, anger, and revenge fantasies, as delineated next.

Consumer behavior is often goal-directed. A desired outcome of a service encounter, for instance, a special look on one's daughter's wedding, can be defined as a specific type of goal, namely, "a mental image or other end point representation associated with affect toward which action may be directed" (Pervin 1989, p. 474). Along these lines, failed service encounters lead to unattained goals. These unattained goals disturb consumers until they are attained, replaced, or forgotten (compare Carver, 1996). Since most consumers do not complain when services have failed (Day, Gabricke, Schaetzle, and Staubach, 1981; Oliver, 1996) and complaining does not always produce the desired results - more than half of the customers feel more negative about a company after they have gone through the complaint process (Hart, Heskett, and Sasser, 1990) - consumers' goals are often still not attained at the time a service encounter has ended. When these goals are important to consumers, as in the

opening example, feelings of anger and (with that) revenge fantasies will linger (compare Averill, 1982; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985; Smith and Lazarus, 1993; Roseman, 1984). Since anger involves both self-justification – that is, people may feel that they have a right to be angry – and activation – which may make it difficult to disengage from anger via mood-regulation strategies such as distraction (Averill, 1982, 1983; Rusting and Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998; Tice and Baumeister, 1993) – revenge fantasies may arise in customers even long after a failed service encounter has ended.

Associative network theory suggests that the revenge fantasies that consumers may develop in response to a failed service encounter are associated with a wide range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral phenomena (Berkowitz, 1983, 1990; Bower, 1981; 1991). For instance, it is shown that the appearance of repetitive, negative thoughts is a major contributor to negative emotions and moods, to the formation of negative impressions and attitudes, and to the behavior in which people engage (Martin, 1986; Lassiter, Pezzo, and Apple, 1993; Rusting and Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998; Taylor and Schneider, 1989). Along these lines, revenge fantasies may affect consumers' emotions, attitudes towards a service firm, decision-making, and behavioral responses to failed service encounters. Nonetheless, despite these possible potent implications of revenge fantasies, systematic research on their effects on consumers' emotions and behavioral intentions is absent. The present study aims to fill this gap in the literature.

Chapter Objectives and Overview of Studies

Considerable research has investigated coping strategies of angry people and the utility and/or the consequences of these specific strategies (e.g., Linden et al., 2003; Deffenbacher et al., 1996; Sukhodolsky, Golub, and Cromwell, 2001, see also Chapter 1, this dissertation). In this chapter, the effects of revenge fantasies on customer anger and customers' behavioral intentions are investigated in two controlled studies. Study 4.1 investigates the effects of revenge fantasies and distraction on anger using a **pretest-posttest, control group design.** The results of this study suggest that revenge fantasies increase, rather than decrease, anger (whereas distraction does not). Study 4.2 investigates the effects of revenge fantasies on anger and behavioral intentions using a post-test only, control group design. In this study, the effects

of revenge fantasies are also compared with the effects of complaint thoughts. The results of this second study converge with and build on the results of Study 4.1. Whereas revenge fantasies are found to increase customer anger, the desire for vengeance, and intentions to engage in negative word-of-mouth communication, they are found to decrease intentions to remain loyal to the service firm. In contrast, thinking about complaining only increases customers' intentions to complain, but has no effect on anger, the desire for vengeance, and intentions to remain loyal to the service firm. Implications for theory and practice are delineated.

Study 4.1: Effects of Revenge Fantasies on Customer Anger

Theoretical Foundations

When angry, consumers may deal with their emotions in a variety of ways. For instance, they may talk the incident over with the service provider, engage in verbal or physical aggression, tell a third party about the service failure in order to get back at the service provider, or engage in calming activities. In general, there are two major forms of dealing with anger-provoking events (Folkman and Lazarus, 1985). First, people can focus on the problem that has occurred, trying to find some way of changing it. Along these lines, angry customers may talk the incident over with the service provider and ask the service provider to take care of it. This is called problem-focused coping. Second, people can also aim to reduce the negative emotion, even if the situation itself cannot be changed, for instance via turning to other activities to take their mind off the situation. This second process is called emotion-focused coping. Since it does not (yield a way to) solve the problem, developing revenge fantasies is a specific form of emotion-focused coping.

Some researchers have speculated that revenge fantasies may decrease angry feelings and associated detrimental behavior. For instance, Ornstein (1999) has put forward that people may benefit from developing fantasies about getting even because these fantasies can help to understand, explain, and ultimately to accept what has happened and thus contribute to the attainment of closure to a conflict. What's more, Tripp and Bies (1997) have suggested that revenge fantasies may serve as a substitute for actual vengeful behavior and satisfy the desire for vengeance by allowing the angry person to release or purge angry feelings through

mental simulation. Indeed, anecdotic evidence presented by these authors provides some support for their contentions. However, in contrast with these findings, associative network theory suggests that revenge fantasies will actually increase anger, as delineated next.

Revenge fantasies may be quite vivid and violent in nature, as depicted by the following example, provided by a participant of a critical incidents study of Bies and Tripp (1996, p. 256).

> The frail old man's eyes bulged and his face contorted wildly as he struggled to free his bound arms and legs. Duct tape covered his mouth. I slowly turned towards him and paused thoughtfully. My body trembled in anticipation as I lifted the 50-pound vat over his writhing body. The golden liquid languorously oozed downward. The rich smell of nectar filled the room. Next came the jar. I placed it in front of his face and carefully unscrewed the lid. I had worked for weeks gathering my little helpers. His frail, honey-covered body stiffened and his eyes widened in horror, then glazed over in shock. "You never should have provoked me," I said with a rueful smile as I headed for the door. "Never."

As excessive as this example may seem, both other examples of the intensity of revenge fantasies and recent acts of consumer vengeance demonstrate that the intensity and cruelty of this scenario is not an anomaly. Participants of recent revenge studies reported that, after they were harmed, they were "consumed by the thought of revenge" and in need of "satisfying the burning desire of revenge" (Tripp and Bies, 1997, p. 149). What's more, recent history provides many examples of the vigorous nature of vengeance: in 1999, for example, 44-year-old Mark Barton killed nine people at two Atlanta day-trading companies where he had lost a half-million dollars buying and selling Internet stocks. Eventually, Barton committed suicide, but not until he had exacted revenge against the trading firms he held responsible for his financial ruin (Fox and Levin, 2001).

Because of the at times violent and aggressive nature of revenge fantasies and the focus of these fantasies, which is to make the offender suffer, associative network theory suggests that revenge fantasies do not help to make angry feelings go away. On the contrary, this theory predicts that revenge fantasies are likely to *increase* angry feelings.

Associative network theory assumes that emotional states are best regarded as an associative network in which specific types of feelings, thoughts, action tendencies, and

actions are linked together in memory (Berkowitz, 1983, 1989; Bower, 1981; Lang, 1979). Each emotion is conceptualized as a central organizing node that links together memories and beliefs associated with this emotion (nodes in the network). When an emotion node is activated, beliefs and memories associated with the emotion are brought to mind, prolonging or increasing the emotion. In other words, associative network theory presumes that specific emotional thoughts or feelings *prime* associated beliefs and memories; that is, it heightens their availability for conscious use. Thus, emotions are increased or prolonged. Accordingly, activation of any one of the components in an associative network tends to activate other parts as well. Associative network theory thus suggests that revengeful, angry, and aggressive thoughts are linked together in memory; once a revengeful thought is processed or stimulated, activation spreads out along the network links and primes or activates associated angry and aggressive thoughts as well. Not only angry thoughts are associated together in memory in this way, but these thoughts are also linked to angry and aggressive feelings.

Throughout the years, a great deal of evidence has supported this basic premise of associative network theory (e.g., Bower, 1981; Lang, 1979; Lyubomirsky and Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998; Rusting and Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998). For instance, in support of this theory, anger rumination has been shown to exacerbate angry mood (Rusting and Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998; Bushman, 2002). These findings provide some support for the contention that revengeful fantasies increase feelings of anger. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1: revenge fantasies will increase, rather than decrease, anger.

Method

Design. Following previous research on anger rumination, a **pretest-posttest, control group design was used.** The control group was provided with a distraction task, which aimed to focus the participant's attention away from their negative emotions, associated thoughts and feelings, and the causes and consequences of these emotions. Previous research on the effects of distraction on angry mood suggests that distraction does not affect anger (e.g., Rusting and Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998).

Participants. One hundred psychology students (72 women and 28 men), ranging in age from 18 to 38, with a median age of 21, participated for partial course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the experimental conditions.

Anger induction. Participants read the following scenario.

> You and a friend go to a pizza-restaurant to celebrate a special occasion. Your prior experiences with the restaurant, which also delivers pizzas at home, are good. It is not possible to make a reservation and when you arrive at the restaurant you notice that it is a busy night; all tables are taken. You are asked to wait at the bar.
>
> At a given moment you notice that other guests who have arrived later are offered a table while you are still waiting. Some time later this happens again. On both occasions you are palmed off with a smile. Apparently some guests get a table quicker than others, despite the fact that it is not possible to make reservations.
>
> You find this unfair. When you convey this to the restaurant owner, the reaction is one of irritation. The restaurant owner says something you do not understand in Italian and walks away. Fifteen minutes later, you are still waiting. You are very angry with the service provider.

After participants had read this scenario, they were asked how easy it was for them to imagine this event and how easy it was for them to imagine that they would become angry after experiencing this event on a seven-point scale (1= very easy, 7 = very difficult). Subsequently, the intensity of anger was measured on a seven-point, multi-item scale (see also section "Dependent variable").

Response tasks. The response tasks were designed to manipulate the focus of participants' thoughts. Participants in the "revenge fantasies" condition read the following task:

> Sometimes when people are angry at someone, they develop fantasies about getting even. In a few moments, we will ask you to develop revenge fantasies in the light of the negative experience in the pizza-restaurant. We will subsequently ask you to write down your fantasies.
>
> Please take two minutes to develop vengeful thoughts about your experience in the restaurant. Then, write down your thoughts as lively and as detailed as you possibly can.

Participants in the distraction condition were confronted with a translation task. They received 12 sentences written in Cyrillic Russian. In each sentence, one word had to be translated. The words that had to be translated were all related to locations: city, village,

place, parish, district, or hamlet. A pretest among 40 participants (16 female, 24 male, median age 21 years) indicated that this condition is emotionally neutral. Two participants reported being familiar with Russian. Since these participants did not complete the translation task, their data were excluded from the analysis.

Dependent variable. Anger was measured before and after the manipulation. Seven-point, multi-item scales were used to measure the intensity of anger (Izard, 1977; 3 items; $\alpha = .787$ (before manipulation), respectively .802 (after manipulation)). The scales were introduced with the following question: "*How do you feel about the service experience at this particular moment?*"

Results

Classification of revenge fantasies. Revenge fantasies of participants were very detailed and lively. For example, one participant wrote: "Tell all my friends, acquaintances, and family about my bad experience in the pizza restaurant. I would exaggerate and tell them that the food was awful and that I got sick after eating in the restaurant, and so on." Another participant stated: "The restaurant also delivers pizza's at home… big mistake! I will call them from various payphones and place fake orders so they will lose money. I will order the most expensive pizza's, with extra cheese and topping. I really hate it when I am treated like that so I will repeat this for a couple of weeks."

Content analysis was used to classify participants' revenge fantasies. The procedure that was used to develop categories and subcategories was very similar to the procedure employed in Chapter 2. As a first step, two judges coded 50 answers into 77 different themes. Then, they independently developed mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories. Finally, a third, independent judge carried out the final sort of the behaviors. The inter-judge reliability averaged .96, and no individual coefficient was lower than .80.

Table 4.1 *Contents of Revenge Fantasies in Response to a Negative Service Experience, Study 4.1*

(Sub)category	(Sub)category definition	Number of themes	Number of themes in % of themes (77)	Number of themes in % of fantasies (50)	Example(s)
Negative WOM	Telling others about the negative service encounter and advising them not to acquire the services of the organization.				
Private WOM	Negative WOM to friends and relatives	22	28.57	44.00	Inform friends and relatives about what happened, tell untruths about the restaurant, exaggerate the event.
Public WOM	Negative WOM to or via organizations or agencies	7	9.09	14.00	Generate negative publicity via newspaper, via posters, call health inspection, release mice and call health inspection.
Aggression	Behavior that is intended to injure another person physically or verbally or to destroy property				
Verbal aggression		11	14.29	22.00	Yell, tell someone off, give someone a piece of my mind, talk loud.
Destruction of property		11	14.29	22.00	Break something, set restaurant on fire, paint restaurant, destroy kitchen, knock over furniture, make a mess.
Physical aggression		5	6.49	10.00	Hit someone, throw things at someone, spit in food other clients.
Switching	Termination of the relationship with the service provider	12	15.58	24.00	
Create costs/ a loss	Harming the service firm monetarily	7	9.09	14.00	Order pizzas on fake addresses, leave without paying the bill, steal things
Boycotting	Urging individual customers to refrain from doing business with the service provider	2	2.60	4.00	

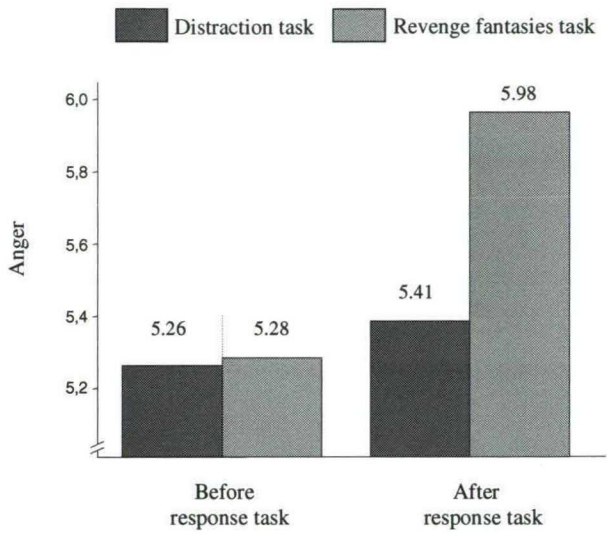
Note. Categories and corresponding subcategories are presented in column 1 and defined in column 2. Column 3 provides information on how many times specific themes were mentioned by the participants. Column 4 provides information about how many times a specific theme was mentioned as a percentage of the total number of themes (77). Column 5 contains the percentage of participants that mentioned a specific category or subcategory. Column 6 provides examples of fantasies.

Revenge fantasies were categorized into five categories: negative WOM, aggressive behavior, switching, create costs/a loss, and boycotting. Table 4.1 shows that negative WOM and aggression were both separated into subcategories (respectively private and public WOM, and verbal aggression, property damage, and physical aggression).

A further inspection of Table 4.1 shows that the majority of the scenarios was not extremely hostile and/or aggressive in nature. However, all fantasies included acts designed to harm (business of) the service provider. Indeed, the less aggressive acts such as negative WOM, switching, and boycotting may even harm service organizations where it hurts most: their bottom-line performance.

Effects of response tasks on anger. To determine the effects of the two conditions on anger a 2 x 2 mixed model ANOVA on the anger scores with one within-subjects factor (anger intensity before and after the response condition manipulation) and one between-subjects factor (response condition) was performed. A significant interaction effect would predict that the development of revenge fantasies and distraction differentially affect feelings of anger. The individual means for each condition are presented in Figure 4.1. The main effect for anger was significant $F(1, 98) = 25.41$, $p < .001$, the main effect for condition was marginally significant $F(1, 98) = 3.29$, $p = .072$, and the interaction between pre- and post-response manipulation was significant $F(1, 98) = 10.90$, $p < .001$. Contrast tests were used for a further examination of the means. The results of these tests indicate that anger ratings significantly increased following thinking about vengeance, $F(1, 98) = 34.80$, $p < .001$, whereas they did not change after distraction $F(1, 98) = 1.51$, $p = .22$. Thus, in support of hypothesis 1, thinking about revenge increased feelings of anger, whereas distraction did not have such an effect. Finally, the results indicated that participants were angrier after thinking about revenge than they were after they were distracted $F(1, 98) = 8.59$, $p = .004$.

Figure 4.1 *Mean Anger Ratings for Revenge Fantasies and Distraction Groups Before and After Manipulation, Study 4.1.*



Discussion

Participants who developed revenge fantasies following an anger-provoking service failure showed an increase in angry feelings, whereas those who were distracted did not show such an increase. Hence, the results of this study support an associative-network approach to the effects of revenge fantasies on anger and contradict earlier anecdotic evidence on the effects of revenge fantasies on feelings and behavior. As far as the effect of distraction is concerned, the present findings complement previous research results suggesting that distraction has no effect on angry feelings (Bushman, 2002; Rusting and Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998).

Study 4.2: Effects of Different Emotion-Regulation Strategies on Consumers

The results of Study 1 are satisfactory and in line with the hypothesis. However, a limitation of the pretest-posttest design is that the assessment of anger before the response task may have influenced participants' answers after the response task because of "hypothesis

guessing": participants may have tried to figure out what the study aimed to prove and may have based their answers on what they guessed, not just on the treatment. To overcome this limitation, Study 4.2 investigates the effects of revenge fantasies on customer anger (and a range of behavioral intentions) using a posttest-only, control group design; in this study a distraction group is used as the control group. What's more, an additional condition ("complaint thoughts") is included to investigate how idiosyncratic "angry" thoughts affect anger. In other words, a "complaint thoughts" condition is included to investigate whether every "angry" thought, rather than revenge thoughts in particular, increase anger.

Hypotheses

Revenge fantasies that customers may develop in response to a failed service encounter are imitative representations of future events. Hence, developing revenge fantasies is a specific form of mental simulation. Mental simulation has previously been defined as the cognitive construction of hypothetical scenarios or the reconstruction of real scenarios (Taylor and Schneider, 1989). It includes rehearsals of (likely) future events (such as going over the events that will occur the next day), replays of past events (such as ruminating about a negative past event), fantasies (such as imagining taking a friend to the cinema or revenge fantasies), or a combination of these elements (Pham and Taylor, 1999). Simulations can occur involuntarily, as when an angry person replays an anger-provoking event over and over, or simulations can occur intentionally, as when an angry person rehearses the harm he or she will inflict on the target.

This study compares the effects of two related, yet different forms of mental simulation; revenge fantasies and complaint thoughts. Previous research on mental simulation (Pham and Taylor, 1999; Taylor and Schneider, 1989) and associative network theory suggests that, because of their divergent characteristics, complaints thoughts and revenge fantasies have distinctive effects on consumers' emotions and behavioral intentions.

Developing revenge fantasies differs from thinking about complaining in several ways. For instance, whereas revenge fantasies focus on obtaining something bad for the other, complaint thoughts focus on attaining something good for the self; whereas revenge fantasies are usually destructive in nature, complaint thoughts are typically constructive in nature; and finally, whereas revenge fantasies are often violent and aggressive in nature, complaint thoughts are usually non-violent and non-aggressive in nature. For these reasons, these

different types of mental simulation may have differential effects on customer anger. Since complaint thoughts focus on "something good" and because they are constructive in nature, complaints thoughts may be associatively linked to other positive thoughts and feelings. Hence, complaint thoughts may *decrease* anger, whereas in contrast revenge fantasies *increase* anger. Thus, it is hypothesized that whereas revenge fantasies lead to an increase of customer anger, thinking about complaining will, because of its positive orientation, lead to a decrease in anger.

H2a: Thinking about getting even increases, rather than decreases, customer anger.

H2b: Thinking about complaining decreases, rather than increases, customer anger.

Mental simulation may influence customers' behavioral responses to failed service encounters because it influences their emotions. However, different forms of mental simulation may also influence behavior and behavioral intentions in a more direct way. For instance, mental simulations make courses of actions seem real or true and thus create a state of readiness for action. It is also demonstrated that mental simulation is an efficient and effective means both for deriving plans and for checking their viability (Markman et al., 1993; Taylor and Schneider, 1989). Along these lines, the information derived from thinking about getting even may help consumers to construct effective plans of actions to get back at the service provider. Likewise, thinking about complaining may help consumers to develop effective plans to file a complaint.

Hence, it is proposed that whereas developing revenge fantasies increases the desire for vengeance and intentions to switch and to engage in negative WOM[1], thinking about complaining increases the possibility that consumers engage in complaining. It is hypothesized that:

H3a: Thinking about getting even increases the desire to get even, intentions to switch, and intentions to engage in negative WOM, whereas it does not increase complaint intentions.

H3b: Thinking about complaining increases complaint intentions, but does not increase the desire to get even, intentions to switch and intentions to engage in negative WOM.

Method

Participants and design. In total 147 business students (49 women and 98 men), ranging in age from 18 to 27, with a median age of 20, participated for a partial course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions of a posttest-only control group, between-subjects design.

Anger induction. Participants read the following scenario[2].

> You have taken your bicycle to the bicycle repair shop for a number of minor repairs. When you pick up your bike a couple of days later, you have to pay € 60. You pay the money and leave the shop.
>
> When you are cycling home, you find out that your bicycle still has some deficiencies. The back wheel is still buckled and the gearshift is also still broken.
>
> When you take a look at the bill at your home, you find out that the bicycle repairer has nonetheless charged you for these repairs. You feel cheated and therefore you are very angry with the bicycle repairer.

After participants had read this scenario, they were asked how easy it was for them to imagine this event and how easy it was for them to imagine that they would become angry after experiencing this event on a seven-point scale (1= very easy, 7 = very difficult).

Response tasks. The response tasks were designed to manipulate the focus of participants' thoughts. Participants in the "revenge fantasies" condition were asked to develop revenge fantasies and to write down these fantasies in an open-ended format. This task was very

[1] Note that switching and negative WOM have been discerned as potential ways to get even with a service firm in Study 4.1.
[2] At the time Study 4.2 was conducted research of the Dutch Automobile Association ANWB showed that more than half of the car repair shops charged customers for repairs that were not done or were not needed.

similar to the response task reported in Study 4.1. Participants in the "complaint thoughts" condition were confronted with an analogous task, which is delineated next.

> Sometimes when people are angry with someone, they develop thoughts about filing a complaint. In a few moments, we will ask you to develop thoughts about complaining at the bicycle repairer with regard to the negative experience you had. We would also like to know what these thoughts are. For that reason, we will subsequently ask you to write down your thoughts.
>
> Please take two minutes to develop thoughts about how you would file your complaint at the bicycle repairer. Then, write down your thoughts as lively and as detailed as you possibly can.

A distraction condition was used as a control condition. Participants in the distraction condition were asked to describe either their dorm room or living room. Previous research (Rusting and Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998) and the results of Study 4.1 suggest that such a task is emotionally neutral.

Dependent variables. Table 4.2 provides an overview of the scale items and scale reliabilities of the variables included in this study. Anger was measured with 7-point, multi-item scales adapted from previous studies (Izard, 1977). These scales were introduced with the following question: "*How do you feel about the service experience at this particular moment?*" Seven-point, multi-item scales adapted from prior research (Bechwati and Morrin, 2003) were used to measure the desire to get even with the service provider. Scales measuring customers' behavioral intentions closely followed existing scales measuring reactions to service failure. Intentions to engage in negative WOM, complaint intentions (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1996), and loyalty (Oliver, 1996) were assessed by having participants indicate the degree to which they were inclined to such behavior on seven-point scales, anchored by "not at all" and "very much."

Results

Revenge fantasies. Three participants were eliminated from the revenge fantasies condition because they argued that they found it difficult to develop revenge fantasies when they had not

first given the service firm the opportunity to explain what had happened and/or to recover the service failure. These participants indicated that they would file a complaint first. For that reason they did not develop any revenge fantasies. Fantasies reported by the remaining participants in this condition were sorted into the classification scheme of Study 4.1 with an eye to developing new categories. No new categories emerged. This indicates that the set of analyzed revenge fantasies in the first study forms an adequate representation of revenge fantasies in response to failed service encounters.

Table 4.2 *Scale Items Measures, Study 4.2*

Angry (α = .788)
Angry
Enraged
Annoyed
Desire for vengeance (α = .912)
I should do something to get even with the bicycle repairer
It is unimportant for me to get back at the bicycle repairer despite their wrong-doing (-)
I am not just mad with the bicycle repairer; I need to get even.
I have no desire to get revenge from the bicycle repairer (-)
I would like to make the bicycle repairer regret what they did to me
Intentions to engage in negative WOM (α = .906)
Say negative things about the bicycle repairer to other people
Discourage friends and relatives to do business with the bicycle repairer
Intentions to remain loyal to the service firm (α = .719)
I intend to continue acquiring the services of this bicycle repairer in the future
I will acquire the services of the bicycle repairer less frequently than before in the future (-)
When I have a need to have my bicycle repaired, I will only acquire the services of this repairer
Complaint Intentions
Complain to the service provider about the service quality

Note. (-) indicates that items were reverse coded.

Participants reported a wide range of fantasies about how they would get back at the bicycle repairer. For example, one participant stated: "I would take a very old, completely wrecked bicycle to the repairer, and tell him that it's my mother's, father's, grandmother's, or grandfather's. I would tell him that I am very attached to it and that therefore I want to have it fixed, despite its bad condition. I would provide him with a false address and telephone number, so that he would not be able to contact me once he had fixed the bike. Therefore he would be saddled with the bike after having invested a lot of time and money in it. Because the bike is very old, he would never be able to sell it at a reasonable price." This story was categorized as "create costs/a loss". Along these lines, a total number of 64 themes were

mentioned by the 48 participants who fantasized about getting even. Revenge fantasies included engaging in private WOM, which was mentioned 18 times, public WOM (7 times), verbal aggression (12 times), destruction of property (8 times), physical aggression (4 times), switching (9 times), creating costs/a loss (4 times), and finally, boycotting (2 times).

Complaint thoughts. Forty-nine participants developed thoughts about complaining. A typical complaint scenario looked as follows: "I would take my bike and the bill to the bicycle repairer. I would point out that even though the bicycle repairer made me pay for a number of repairs, they were not carried out properly. Then, I would make clear that I want to have these repairs fixed, and this time properly. After that, I would just have to wait and see." Along these lines, most participants indicated that they would file a direct, verbal complaint at the bicycle repairer. Additionally, a small number of participants indicated that they would complain either via the telephone or via a letter (respectively two and three participants).

Effects of response tasks on anger and behavioral intentions. Table 4.3 shows the means and standard deviations of anger and behavioral intentions for participants in the revenge fantasies condition, the complaint thoughts condition, and the control condition. To assess whether the intensity of anger and behavioral intentions varied per coping strategy, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The results of the MANOVA suggest that different strategies for coping with anger-provoking events differently affect customers anger and behavioral intentions: both Pillai's trace and Hotelling's trace ($p < .001$) indicated a significant between-group difference.

The results of subsequent contrast-tests are in support of Hypothesis 2a and 3a. The contrast-tests showed that participants in the revenge fantasies condition were significantly angrier ($p < .05$), more inclined to get even ($p < .001$) and more inclined to engage in negative WOM ($p < .001$), whereas they were less inclined to remain loyal ($p < .05$) than participants in the control condition. These results converge with, and build on, the findings of Study 4.1. Hypothesis 2b was not supported. No significant differences in anger were found for participants in the complaint thoughts condition and the control condition. Hypothesis 3b was supported by the results. Participants in the complaint thoughts condition were more inclined to file a complaint with the service provider than participants in the

control condition ($p < .05$). Note that the desire for vengeance and intentions to remain loyal to the service firm did not differ from the control condition. Intentions to engage in negative word-of-mouth communication were actually lower for participants in the complaint thoughts condition than for participants in the control condition ($p < .05$).

Table 4.3 Means and Standard Deviations for Constructs, Study 4.2

	Mean (SD) per condition		
Construct	*Revenge*	*Complain*	*Control*
Desire for vengeance	3.04 (1.57)[1]	1.91 (.99)	2.01 (1.20)
Complain	5.95 (1.41)	6.14 (1.29)[2]	5.62 (1.54)
Anger	5.65 (.74)[2]	5.01 (1.13)	5.23 (1.36)
Negative WOM	6.22 (.77)[1]	4.97 (1.59)[2]	5.69 (1.34)
Loyalty	1.94 (.80)[1]	2.56 (1.24)	2.32 (.99)

Note. N =147. [1] significant difference with control condition at $p < .001$. [2] significant difference with control condition at $p < .05$.

Discriminant analysis. Multiple discriminant analysis was used to follow up the MANOVA. Linear combinations of specific emotions and behavioral intentions were used to classify the participants of Study 4.2 into one of the three conditions. As a first step, discriminant functions were derived, based on the full sample of 147 participants. The results show that only one of the discriminant functions was significant. This means that the group differences shown by the MANOVA can be explained in terms of one underlying function. Table 4.4 shows that this function explains 82.8% of the variance. The discriminant loadings and standardized coefficients demonstrate that a desire for vengeance and negative word-of-mouth communication were the main contributing variables to group separation.

Table 4.4 *Multiple Discriminant Analysis Results, Study 4.2*

	Function 1		*Function 2*	
Emotions/behavioral intentions	*Discriminant loading*	*Standardized coefficient*	*Discriminant loading*	*Standardized coefficient*
Anger	.459	.079	.046	.160
Desire for vengeance	.727	.483	.524	.470
Negative WOM	.777	.476	-.355	-.484
Loyalty	-.472	-.081	.011	-.069
Complaint behavior	-.074	-.103	.662	.498
χ^2	38.717 ($p < .001$)		7.159 ($p = .128$)	
Variance explained	82.8%		17.2%	
Canonical correlation	.448		.223	

An assessment of the predictive accuracy level of the disicriminant model, showed that the hit ratio for the analysis sample was 56.2%, whereas the hit ratio for cross-validated results was 51.4%. Hence, the maximum chance criterion was outperformed by the discriminant model: the improvement over chance for the analysis sample was 64.8% whereas the improvement over chance for the cross-validated results was 51.1%. These results show that the validity of the discriminant model is satisfactory.

Discussion

The results of Study 4.2 support and complement the results of Study 4.1. What's more, it is shown that different forms of mental simulation have distinctive effects on customers' anger and behavioral tendencies. Hence, it is shown that not every thought that is related to the anger-provoking incident increases anger.

Specifically, Study 4.2 shows that revengeful fantasies trigger elevated levels of anger, increased intentions to get back at the service firm, and increased intentions to engage in negative word-of-mouth communication. On the other hand, revenge fantasies are shown to decrease intentions to remain loyal to the service firm. In contrast with revenge fantasies, complaint thoughts intensify complaint intentions. However, they do not affect customers' anger, desire for vengeance, and intentions to remain loyal to the service firm. Intentions to engage negative word-of-mouth communication were even found to decrease. These results support associative-network theory and converge with prior findings on the effects of mental simulation on emotions and action readiness.

In contrast to one of the hypotheses of this study, complaint thoughts did not decrease customer anger. A first explanation for this finding is that thinking about complaining involves thinking about the negative event. This negative focus may counterbalance the more positive orientation of thinking about complaining. A second explanation for this finding is that anger may serve a purpose in the complaint process: it may provide consumers with the motivation and the means to deal with the failed service encounter (compare Chapter 1, page 7 and 8, the functionality of anger).

General Discussion

The results of two studies suggest that *revenge fantasies* fuel angry feelings, increase the desire for vengeance and the tendency to engage in negative word-of-mouth communication, and decrease the intention to remain loyal to the service firm. Hence, the results contradict earlier anecdotic evidence on the effects of revenge fantasies on feelings and behavior and support an associative network approach to the effects of revenge fantasies on anger.

The findings of Study 4.1 suggest that both from the viewpoint of the customer and from the viewpoint of the service firm, *distraction* may have some benefits over revenge fantasies; anger does not increase when consumers are distracted. However, for many consumers angry thoughts may be difficult to escape. Consumers may feel that they have a right to be angry and it may therefore be difficult to disengage from anger and associated revengeful fantasies through the use of distraction. For these reasons, distraction may only help in the short term, whereas in the long run this emotion-regulation strategy may turn out to be rather inadequate.

In contrast, both consumers and service firms may benefit from *complaint thoughts*. The encouragement of complaint thoughts might be effective for two reasons. First, similar to distraction and in contrast with revenge fantasies, complaint thoughts do not increase anger. Second and more important, thinking about complaining may increase the probability that customers engage in actual complaint behavior. The present findings provide some support for this contention, even though intentions are an imperfect proxy for behavior, as the previous chapter has noted. Service firms can encourage both complaint thoughts and complaining by means of customer satisfaction surveys, comments forms, or the display of a notice of the firm's complaints handling policy. Of course, it is crucial that when customers are stimulated to think about complaining, service providers are able to effectively deal with the anger-provoking service failure. If they are, customers' negative emotions and associated detrimental behavior will further decrease, whereas the probability that customers remain loyal to the firm has been shown to increase profoundly (e.g., Kelley, Hoffman, and Davis, 1993). On the other hand, if service firms are unable to recover the failure in a satisfactory manner, as in the opening example of the bad haircut, customers may even feel more negative about the firm than they did before they complained. In that case, distraction is the better option.

The combined findings of two studies suggest that (even though complaint intentions are an imperfect proxy for actual acts of complaining and vengeful fantasies will probably vastly outnumber actual acts of vengeance) the development of idiosyncratic angry thoughts – "I will make them pay" versus "I will make them reimburse" – is a crucial first step in a chain of events that will ultimately lead to either vengeance or justice. More research is needed to test this contention.

More research on the long-term effects of distraction is also needed. In this study, the short-term effects of distracting customers in response to anger-provoking service encounters were examined. In line with previous research findings, the present findings suggest that distraction is an effective technique for dealing with angry customers. Nonetheless, to date it is unclear to what extent distraction is effective in the long run. Further research is needed to assess the long-term implications of distraction in terms of its effects of negative word-of-mouth communication and switching.

Other research may address personal and contextual factors that influence consumers' use of different emotion-regulation strategies. To date, it is largely unclear under which circumstances customers will develop revenge fantasies or complaint thoughts and how contextual factors, such as for instance perceived control over the service encounter and the relationship with the service provider, and personal factors, such as for instance gender, age, or trait anger, influence consumers' tendencies to engage in specific forms of coping. More knowledge of these contextual and personal factors may increase the effectiveness of strategies that service providers might employ to deal with consumers' anger.

Conclusion

Anecdotic evidence suggests that revenge fantasies should reduce angry feelings and angry behavior. In contrast, the present findings suggest that revenge fantasies increase anger and vengeful intentions. Since revenge-seeking consumers have numerous possibilities to covertly harm the service firm, such as negative word-of-mouth communication and switching, angry consumers are merely faced with minor obstacles to follow through on their revengeful intentions: an ongoing motivation may therefore be sufficient for consumers to engage in actual acts of revenge. Hence, the present findings suggest that a scenario in which

customers develop revenge thoughts in response to a failed service encounter is the worst possible scenario for service providers. Measured actions of service providers are therefore needed. A stimulation of complaint thoughts is effective when service firms are able to adequately deal with the service failure. If they are not, distracting angry customers is an alternative, second-best solution.

Postscript

In December 2002, a woman demolished a hairdresser's shop with an axe. The woman had indicated that she was not satisfied with her new haircut. Disgruntled with the hairdresser's recovery offer, the woman had left the shop in an angry state, informing the store personnel that 'they hadn't seen the last of her'. According to the proprietor of the shop, she came back with a brand-new axe. After threatening some staff members with the axe, she smashed two mirrors, threatened another staff member, and finally left the shop (De Volkskrant, 2002).

5

Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

The first chapter of this dissertation provided a brief review of basic emotion research findings on anger and an outline of the empirical issues that were studied in this dissertation. Chapter 2 to 4 empirically investigated different aspects of customer anger. The general purpose of this final chapter is to summarize the main findings of the empirical studies presented in this dissertation and to discuss the theoretical and practical implications of these findings. Directions for future research are also provided and discussed.

Research Projects

The general objective of this dissertation was to contribute to understanding customer behavior through an increased understanding of customer anger. To attain this objective seven empirical studies were performed. Table 5.1 provides an overview of the main characteristics of the various research projects included in this dissertation. It shows that throughout this dissertation customer anger was studied from a variety of different perspectives. What's more, different theoretical backgrounds were used; the different research projects drew from a wide variety of frameworks from emotion theory, resource theory, associative network theories, and marketing theory to derive the hypotheses that were tested. Different study settings, sampling designs, and techniques to analyze the data were used to add rigor to the purposive studies included in this dissertation. The next section discusses the main findings and the implications of these studies.

Table 5.1 *Main Characteristics of Research Projects*

	Chapter 1	*Chapter 2*	*Chapter 3*	*Chapter 4*
Subject	Prevalence of anger	Precipitating events of anger and angry customers' recovery preferences	Experience and consequences of anger	Effects of different coping strategies on emotions and behavioral intentions
Theoretical Background	Emotion research	Emotion research, Resource theory, Service recovery research	Emotion research, CS/D theory	Associative-network theories
Methodology	Survey	Survey and experiment	Two surveys	Two experiments
Sample	Cross-section of Dutch population	Cross-section of Dutch population, Students	Students	Students
Sample size	100	Study 1: 859 Study 2: 270	Study 1: 120 Study 2: 146	Study 1: 100 Study 2: 147
Industry	Cross-industry	Cross-industry (S1) Banks/Restaurants/ Shops (S2)	Cross-industry (S1/S2)	Restaurants (S1) Shops (S2)
Data analysis	Content Analysis	Content Analysis, Chi-square Analysis, Correspondence Analysis	SUR (Seemingly unrelated regression analysis)	MANOVA, Multiple Discriminant Analysis

Findings

The Prevalence of Anger

The findings presented in Chapter 1 showed that consumers experience a broad range of negative emotions in response to failed service encounters, such as anger, sadness, hatred, anxiety, disgust, fear, and pain. Of these emotions, anger was by far the most frequently experienced emotion; 82% of the participants experienced anger in response to the *most recently* experienced failed service encounter. A follow-up study indicated that in response to the *most intense* negative experience with a service provider, 95% of the participants experienced at least one anger-related emotion. These findings suggest that:

Anger is a common emotional response to failed service encounters.

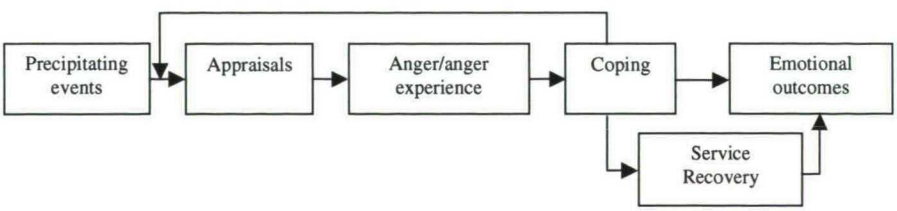
Since anger is a key driver of a range of negative behavioral responses, such as for instance customer switching and negative word-of-mouth communication, this emotion may

strongly affect the bottom-line performance of service firms. Hence, these exploratory findings emphasize the theoretical and practical relevance of research on customer anger.

An examination of the various stages of *the anger process* may help to understand researchers and practitioners in marketing how this emotion is generated, how it unfolds, and to what outcomes it eventually leads. For that reason, Chapter 2 to 4 have dealt with four key stages of the anger process: precipitating events, the anger experience, coping with anger, and the outcomes of anger.

Figure 5.1 provides a schematization of the various stages of the anger process. It shows that specific *precipitating events* and *appraisal* outcomes elicit a specific emotion (anger) with a specific *experiential content. Coping* refers to what a consumer does to try to manage the anger-provoking service encounter. The results of a consumers' coping strategies may feedback to the appraisal process and further influence the emotional state of the angry consumer (emotion-focused coping) or influence the *emotional outcome* directly when action-centered (or problem-focused) forms of coping are used. Hence, the emotional outcome of an anger-provoking service encounter is partly based on whether or not the anger-provoking service encounter has been recovered, but also on consumers' coping strategies, subsequent (re)appraisals, and ensuing emotional reactions. The following sections discuss the main findings of this dissertation per stage.

Figure 5.1 *Stages of the Anger Process*



Precipitating Events

The identification of events that prompt a specific emotion is critical to understanding emotional experience. What's more, to be able to avoid negative emotions, service providers need to understand what events typically instigate these emotions in customers. For these reasons, Chapter 2 investigated and categorized precipitating events of customer anger. It was found that:

Consumer anger is prompted by core service failures, unreliability, inaccessibility, company policies, insensitive behavior, impolite behavior, and inadequate responses to service failures.

These events were categorized in four overarching categories, namely (1) outcome failures, (2) procedural failures, (3) interactional failures, and (4) service recovery failures. The first category represents negative experiences with service providers that are closely related to the outcome of the service process (e.g., "my suitcase was heavily damaged"); the second category contains events that are related to service delivery (e.g., "For three days in a row I tried to make an appointment (...) via the telephone. The line was always busy."); the third category includes events that relate to interpersonal relationships ("She did not stir a finger. She was definitely not meaning to help me."); and finally, the fourth category represents inadequate responses to service failures (e.g., "He did not even apologize." or "He refused to give me back my money.").

The foregoing findings imply certain extensions to services marketing research. Researchers have previously examined the effects of core service failures and waiting for service on anger. However, the results of the present study show that the antecedents of anger are not limited to core service failures and unreliability. Anger in services is also prompted by inaccessibility, company policies, insensitive behavior, impolite behavior, and inadequate responses to service failures. This implies the need to (quantitatively) examine the effects of additional variables on customer anger. What's more, the finding that combinations of causal factors interact to cause customer anger suggests a need to design services research that does not merely focus on selected antecedent variables, because such research will be unable to detect the interaction effects proposed by these exploratory findings. To measure the full effects of service variables on anger, multiple antecedents should be investigated simultaneously.

For service firm management, the seven categories suggest areas in which managers might take action to prevent customer anger. For example, if core service failures cause customers to get angry, then a "zero-defects" philosophy to deliver a correct service every time should be effective in reducing customer anger. The finding that inaccessibility of services causes customers to get angry suggests that service providers may benefit from being easily accessible for consumers. The finding that customer anger may be caused by insensitivity and impoliteness of service staff implies that hiring the right people, adequate

training of service employees, and findings ways to motivate service staff to adequately perform services also reduces customer anger.

As delineated in Chapter 1, basic emotion researchers have argued that specific precipitating events are not sufficient to prompt specific emotions: a personal evaluation of an event is required for a specific emotion to occur. This personal evaluation – or appraisal – depends not only on the events as apprehended (she did not stir a finger), but also on an evaluation of how this event affects a consumer's well-being (she takes me for less than what I am). Hence, specific appraisal outcomes mediate between the precipitating events of consumer anger and the emotional experience of consumer anger. Since specific appraisal outcomes help to understand how precipitating events bring about customer anger, future research on the antecedents of consumer anger may benefit from including both precipitating events and appraisals. The articulation of the foregoing rigorous classification system of precipitating events of anger may provide a fundamental step in developing a comprehensive theory of causes of customer anger in services.

The Experience of Anger

Study 3.1 compared the emotional experience of anger and dissatisfaction in services. It was shown that:

> *Anger and dissatisfaction are distinct emotions with a qualitatively different experiential content.*

Specifically, Study 3.1 showed that angry customers feel like they would explode and like they are overtaken by their emotions; they think of violence and of how unfair the situation is; feel like letting go and behaving aggressively; they typically complain and say something nasty, and finally; they want to get back at the service firm and want to hurt (business of) the service firm. In contrast, dissatisfied customers were shown to have a feeling of unfulfillment, think about what they have missed out on, make a deliberate judgment of how to act and want to find out who or what is responsible for the event. These findings show that the experience of dissatisfaction can be differentiated from the experience of anger in that dissatisfaction merely signals that the outcome of that event was not as good as it was supposed to be, whereas anger involves a more explicit, and sometimes hostile and aggressive orientation towards the target that is held responsible for the service failure, in this case the service provider.

For service providers, the findings on the experiential content of anger show that angry customers might be difficult to work with. Anger in response to failed service encounters has been shown to generate hostile and aggressive feelings, accompanied by a tendency to hurt the service firm. For these reasons, angry customers might behave impolite, insensitive, rude, and perhaps even verbally or physically aggressive. That's why service firm employees should be trained to appropriately deal with the feelings and the behavior of angry customer. Taking measured, determined, and positive actions that aim to reduce angry and aggressive feelings and behavior may provide a basis for dealing with the cause of anger. Adequate strategies for dealing with the cause of anger may positively affect the post-consumption behavior that customers' eventually engage in.

Coping with Anger

The idiosyncratic thoughts, feelings, action tendencies, actions, and emotional goals that are associated with anger suggest that real or fantasized revenge is a nearly universal characteristic of the experience of anger. The findings presented in Chapter 4 showed that:

> *Revenge fantasies increase, rather than decrease, anger, the desire to get even, and negative word-of-mouth communication and decrease, rather than increase, intentions to remain loyal to the service firm.*

These findings are in contrast with the informed contentions of others (Ornstein, 1997; tripp and Bies, 1999) who have suggested that angry people may benefit from developing fantasies about getting even because: (1) these fantasies can help to understand, explain, and ultimately to accept what has happened and thus contribute to the attainment of closure to a conflict, and (2) because revenge fantasies may serve as a substitute for actual acts of vengeance and satisfy the desire for vengeance by allowing the angry person to release angry feelings through mental simulation.

The findings of Chapter 4 show that *distraction* has some benefits over revenge fantasies because customers' anger does not increase when they are distracted. However, for many consumers, angry thoughts may be difficult to escape. For this reason, distraction may very well be a short-term oriented and an eventually inadequate form of coping with failed service encounters.

In contrast, both customers and service firms may benefit from encouraging *complaint thoughts*. The findings of Chapter 4 demonstrate that thinking about complaining may be effective for two reasons: first, complaint thoughts do not increase anger and second, thinking about complaining increases the probability that customers engage in actual complaint behavior. Complaints provide service firms with the opportunity to recover the service failure and thus to prevent the unfavorable effects of service failures such as negative word-of-mouth communication and switching.

The findings of two studies suggest that revenge fantasies increase anger and vengeful intentions. Since revenge-seeking consumers have numerous possibilities to covertly harm the service firm, such as negative word-of-mouth communication and switching, angry consumers are only faced with minor obstacles to follow through on their revengeful intentions: an ongoing motivation may therefore be sufficient for consumers to engage in actual acts of revenge. Hence, the findings suggest that a scenario in which customers develop revenge thoughts in response to a failed service encounter is the worst possible scenario for service providers. Measured actions of service providers are therefore needed. A stimulation of complaint thoughts is effective when service firms are able to adequately deal with the service failure. If they are not, distracting angry customers is an alternative, second-best solution.

Service Recovery

Service recovery refers to the actions taken by an organization in response to a service failure (Zeithmal and Bitner, 2000). An effective recovery of service failures has a strong impact on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and the eventual performance of the service firm. Because residual feelings of customer anger may strongly affect negative word-of-mouth-communication, switching, and eventually the performance of service firms it is imperative that service firms respond effectively when customers get angry when services have failed. Chapter 2 showed that service providers will benefit from adapting their recovery strategy to fit the emotional state of the angry customer. Specifically:

> *A classification of angry customers' preferences for service recovery suggests that adequate service recoveries contain two elements: (1) an effort to decrease angry customers' feelings via an apology, a friendly and empathic recovery, and information about the causes of the problem, and (2) an approach that deals with angry customers'*

emotions via a recovery of the service failure. In line with previous research findings it was found that recovery of the service failure is most effective when the recovery attributes "matches" the type of failure.

The foregoing results provide service firms with guidelines for developing service recovery policies to improve customer service and enhance relationships with customers. These guidelines can be used to: (1) implement service delivery systems that provide for appropriate service recovery efforts, (2) allocate service recovery resources in such a way that they maximize their results (for instance by efficiently and effectively decreasing customer anger), and (3) train employees to deal with angry customers.

The Consequences of anger

The findings of Chapter 3 suggest that whereas dissatisfied customers are motivated to find out who or what is responsible for the service failure, angry customers clearly hold the service provider responsible for the service failure. Hence, the idiosyncratic experiential profiles of anger and dissatisfaction suggest that these emotions have differential effects on customers' responses to failed service encounters. Whereas dissatisfaction may be insufficient to motivate customers to engage in complaint behavior, negative word-of-mouth communication, or switching, anger may result in active attempts to engage in such behavior. Indeed, this dissertation provided support for this contention. Chapter 3 showed that anger affects customers' behavioral responses above and beyond the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction. What's more, it was found that:

Anger is a full mediator of the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on complaint behavior and negative WOM, and a partial mediator of the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction on switching.

No support was found for an alternative model with service encounter dissatisfaction as a mediator of the effect of anger on customers' responses, or for a model with anger as a moderator of the relationship between service encounter dissatisfaction and customers' behavioral responses to failed service encounters. These findings diverge from previous findings in marketing on the interrelationships among customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction, related consumption emotions, and customers' behavioral responses to service failures.

Hence, these findings have important implications with regard to the causal sequence of specific emotions and behavioral responses of consumers.

An understanding the relationships between specific emotions and consumer behavior is important because it helps service firm management to explain and predict the behavior their customers engage in. In addition, it helps service firm management to identify and manage leading determinants of their performance. The above relationships between specific emotions and behavioral responses of customers are particularly important because they no longer position service encounter (dis)satisfaction as a pervasive influence on customers' behavioral responses to failed service encounters. Instead, the findings show that specific outcome-dependent, attibution- dependent emotions such as anger are the central mediating constructs between service encounter (dis)satisfaction and customers' behavioral responses.

For service firm management, the findings of this study further imply that it is of major importance that service firms aim to prevent that their customers get angry. Chapter 2 provides service firm management with critical information on how to avoid customer anger and on how to deal with angry customers.

Implications for Marketing Research

Data collection methods

Chapter 2 and 3 used the critical incident technique to elicit verbatim accounts from consumers about negative experiences with service providers. A major advantage of this technique is that it allows consumers to comprehensively describe their experiences with service providers in their own words. These detailed descriptions may provide service firm management with rich information on for instance how to prevent negative emotions and/or the negative consequences of these emotions. What's more, the verbatim accounts provided by consumers can be used as a valuable basis for company-specific, quantitative, follow-up research. Finally, they can be useful to illustrate to employees how (for instance) negative emotions are prompted and what they can do to adequately deal with a failed service encounter. Consumers' verbatim accounts about negative experiences with service providers can be used to illustrate to employees how they can shape or modify aspects of their behavior. For these reasons, the critical incident technique is an effective supplementary method of

measuring consumers' perceptions of service encounters. Both service firms and marketing research agencies may benefit from employing this technique in a regular fashion.

Questionnaire content

The measurement of service quality and customer satisfaction through surveys plays a major role in both marketing research and marketing management. Arguably, one of the most important aspects regarding the design of service quality and satisfaction surveys is the selection of variables consumers are asked to rate. A proper selection of variables is important, since the collection of too little or wrong information may cause problems during the later steps of the marketing research process.

The combined findings of Chapter 1 and 3 show that service firms may benefit from measuring specific emotions when they want to explain or predict the effect of customer satisfaction on the bottom-line performance of their firm. Chapter 3 explicitly showed that measuring specific emotions enables service firm management to make better predictions about customer behavior, and eventually about service profitability. Satisfaction surveys, which are commonly used to determine the extent to which customers are (dis)satisfied, and the extent to which this influences customers' behavior, usually measure mere (dis)satisfaction. The results of this thesis suggest that measuring mere (dis)satisfaction may not be sufficient to explain and predict customers' behavioral responses.

Directions for Future Research

The studies presented in this dissertation provide numerous new insights in the nature of customer anger. Nevertheless, since academic research on anger in service consumption settings is scarce, many interesting avenues for future research remain. At the end of each chapter several opportunities for future research were already provided. These directions for future research were specific to these chapters. In this section, some additional, more general directions for future research on anger in service consumption settings are provided.

Fairness

Consumers' emotions are influenced by perceptions of fairness. Whereas unfairness is as an important determinant of consumer anger, consumers are most content when their relationships with service providers are fair (Ruth et al., 2002; Tax et al., 1998). Along these

lines, fairness is a central issue in understanding relationships between consumers and service providers.

An interesting finding of psychological research on fairness is that procedural fairness positively affects how people react to the outcome of that process (e.g., Folger, 1977; Folger, Rosenfield, Grove, and Corkran, 1979; Van den Bos, 1999). Several authors have described the effect of procedural fairness on outcome fairness as the fair process effect. The fair process effect has led some authors to conclude that the formation of overall justice judgments is more strongly affected by procedures than by outcomes (e.g., Lind and Tyler, 1988).

Fair process effects have been found in organizational settings (Folger and Konovsky, 1989), court trials (Lind, Kulik, Ambrose, and De Vera Park, 1993), police–citizen encounters (Tyler and Folger, 1980), and political situations (Tyler and Caine, 1981). Interestingly, the evidence in marketing settings is mixed. Some research in marketing has shown that procedural justice is more influential in forming overall firm satisfaction than distributive justice (Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002; Tax et al., 1998), whereas other research has found that outcome fairness is the most critical factor in understanding customer satisfaction (Clemmer and Schneider, 1996). The divergent findings in marketing suggest that the service context may determine the strength of the effects of distributive and procedural fairness on satisfaction. For instance, the effect of procedural fairness might be particularly strong when consumers do not know what outcomes others have received, because in that case a solid social reference point with respect to whether the outcome is fair or unfair is absent (compare Van den Bos, 1999; Van den Bos, Lind, and Wilke, 2002). For that reason, the fair process effect might be particularly prevalent in some service settings such as for instance in repair and utility services (because the outcomes others have received is usually unknown), whereas it might be less prevalent in other settings such as for instance in stores and education (because consumers will have more information on the outcomes others have received). Specific research is needed on how specific contextual factors influence the effect of procedural and distributive fairness on satisfaction. What's more, since being treated fairly by a service provider seems to go further than receiving fair outcomes and since *how* the outcome is received may be at least as important to consumers than *what* is received it is imperative to integrate procedural and distributive justice in future research on fair or unfair and satisfying or dissatisfying outcomes of service encounters. The results of such research

may provide service firms with valuable information on the importance of service delivery and with many useful guidelines for service delivery.

Venting anger

A second area that is worthy of research attention in marketing is *venting*. Venting is usually defined as giving free expression to a strong emotion. To vent, angry customers may explicitly express their anger to the service provider. As a rule, management consultants and training agencies suggest that service providers should allow angry customers to vent[1]: service providers are advised to "let angry people vent their frustrations" (www.ezinearticles.com); to "let the person vent" (www.krconsulting.com); and "if a customer is complaining and angry" to "let them vent" (www.refresher.com). The rationale behind this advice is that allowing customers to vent provides them with the opportunity to purge their angry and aggressive feelings.

However, other consulting and training agencies have argued that service providers should *not* allow consumers to express their emotions. Riley (2002), for instance, urges service providers to "avoid the tendency to allow the customer to express his anger, believing that by venting his hostility, it will somehow dissipate his anger (p. 70)." Riley argues that exactly the opposite may occur and that venting anger can just as easily perpetrate more anger. In accordance with Riley's suggestions, basic emotion research has shown that venting will only increase anger (e.g., Hornberger, 1959; Bushman, 2002). Indeed, Bushman has even demonstrated that "venting to reduce anger is like using gasoline to put out a fire – it only feeds the flame. By fueling aggressive thoughts and feelings, venting also increases aggressive responses" (p. 729). However, such research on venting has generally investigated the effects of venting via having participants perform physical activities, such as for instance pounding nails (Hornberger, 1959) or hitting a punching bag (Bushman, 2002). For that reason, its findings may not necessarily generalize to more conventional situations, such as situations in which angry customers vent their frustrations directly to the service provider. Whereas (displaced and physical) venting to objects may increase angry and aggressive feelings, venting to the offender, which is in essence a form of complaining, may lead to a reduction of aggression because it allows (1) consumers to purge their angry and aggressive feelings and (2) service providers to deal with the anger-provoking service encounter (see also

[1] This web search was carried out with Google on November 22nd 2004.

Parlamis, 2001). To test these contentions, research on how situational factors shape the effects of venting on customers' emotions is needed. Research is needed to investigate how idiosyncratic forms of venting (such as for instance verbal, symbolic, or physical forms of venting and adequate versus less adequate forms of venting) affect a wide range of angry customers' emotional (and behavioral) responses to failed service encounters. Such research should focus on both the short-term and long-term effects of venting. Its results may provide service firm management with useful guidelines for service recovery.

The expression of customer anger

A third area that is worthy of research attention in marketing is the expression of anger in service consumption settings. Chapter 3 showed that anger affects customers' behavioral responses to service failures even when the effect of service encounter dissatisfaction is accounted for. This finding suggests that service providers may greatly benefit from recovering anger-provoking service failures. Chapter 2 provided service providers with specific guidelines for defusing customer anger and for recovering anger-provoking service failures. However, to be able to implement these findings service providers need to be able to recognize angry customers and to tell between for instance angry and dissatisfied customers. For that reason, more research is needed on anger expression. To date it is largely unclear how angry customers express their anger, even though much is known on how people express their anger in general. Because public display of anger may differ from expression in private because of self-presentation one wishes to give an audience (Baumeister and Leary, 1995), social rank (Allan and Gilbert, 2002), and beliefs about the acceptability of expressing anger (Huesmann et al., 1992) more research is needed on how angry consumer express their anger in service consumption settings. Specific research on expressive reactions (such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and gestures), the content of what angry customers say, and the way angry customers acts may present service providers with a valuable basis for dealing with angry customers and thus for avoiding the negative consequences of anger.

Concluding remark

This dissertation has primarily dealt with anger, but also with service failures, negative word-of-mouth communication, deadly sins, dissatisfaction, revenge fantasies, a bad haircut,

unfairness, complaining, wanting to hurt someone, loaded guns, impolite behavior, aggression, and the like. Nevertheless, despite this ostensible focus on the negative, the findings presented in this dissertation provide reasons to be optimistic. Chapter 2, for instance, suggests that service providers have numerous opportunities to deal with a consumer's angry feelings. What's more, it was shown that adequate recovery strategies of service firms can have substantial constructive effects on the emotional state of the consumer. These findings converge with previous findings on the consequences of anger suggesting that anger usually leads to a satisfactory resolution. Averill (1982) has found that in such occasions "feelings of friendliness toward the offender may actually increase" (p. 168). Hence, it is not exceptional that anger-provoking events eventually give rise to friendly and forgiving feelings. Spinoza (1974) has even argued that along these lines an offensive act may indirectly give origin to love. And if that happens, all's well that ends well.

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Nederlandse Samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)

In juni 2004 komt een 71-jarige klant van een Amerikaanse bank zijn bankfiliaal binnen. Hij richt een geladen revolver op een aanwezige bankbediende. Volgens de politie dreigt de man te schieten als fouten op zijn bankrekening niet worden hersteld. De man, die later zou worden omschreven als *zeer boos*, wordt uiteindelijk ontwapend en gearresteerd. Hij beschuldigt de bank ervan "een bende creditcard dieven" te zijn (Associated Press, 2004b).

Een maand eerder slingert een 22-jarige boze klant mobiele telefoons door een winkel. Daarbij raakt hij een medewerker van de winkel en richt hij voor meer dan $ 2,000 aan schade aan. De man, die eveneens wordt gearresteerd, zegt dat hij meer dan genoeg heeft van de service van de winkel in mobiele telefoons. Hij vertelt later dat hij slechts van plan was om het winkelpersoneel eens flink de waarheid te zeggen, maar dat hij zich niet langer kon beheersen toen hij eenmaal in de winkel was (Associated Press, 2004a).

Specifieke emoties hebben een specifieke invloed op gevoelens, gedachten, gedragingen en doelstellingen van mensen. De voorgaande voorbeelden illustreren dat de emotie boosheid een sterk negatief effect kan hebben op de klant die de deze emotie ervaart, op de dienstverlener, en op de relatie tussen de klant en de dienstverlener. Hoewel agressie slechts een van de vele manieren is waarop boze klanten hun emoties kunnen uiten, kan het gedrag van boze klanten *tijdens* het dienstverleningsproces het welzijn van dienstverleners ernstig in gevaar brengen. Eerder onderzoek naar de effecten van boosheid in dienstverlening suggereert bovendien dat boosheid van invloed is op negatieve gedragingen in de *post-consumptiefase*; boosheid leidt tot een toegenomen intentie om te veranderen van dienstverlener en een toegenomen intentie om vrienden, kennissen en dergelijke af te raden gebruik te maken van de diensten van een dienstverlener.

Hoofdstuk 1 van dit proefschrift wijst bovendien uit dat boosheid geen incidentele, slechts sporadisch voorkomende reactie op een negatieve ervaring met dienstverlening is, maar dat boosheid een veel voorkomende emotionele reactie is als dienstverlening faalt: 82 procent van de participanten van een exploratieve studie naar de gangbaarheid van specifieke emoties bij negatieve ervaringen in dienstverlening voelt boosheid in reactie op de *laatste* negatieve ervaring. In combinatie met de negatieve gedragsintenties die boosheid oproept heeft deze emotie dus in potentie een sterk negatief effect op de winstgevendheid en continuïteit van dienstverleners. In het vervolg van dit proefschrift worden daarom verschillende aspecten van boosheid in een dienstverleningscontext belicht. De resultaten van dit onderzoek zijn academisch relevant; daarnaast helpen ze dienstverleners de negatieve effecten van boosheid te voorkomen of te beperken.

Om boosheid te kunnen voorkomen is kennis nodig van gebeurtenissen die kunnen leiden tot boosheid bij klanten van dienstverleners. Omdat systematisch onderzoek naar dit soort gebeurtenissen ontbreekt, onderzoekt en categoriseert *hoofdstuk 2* van dit proefschrift gebeurtenissen die (kunnen) leiden tot boosheid. Zeven soorten gebeurtenissen, verdeeld over vier hoofdcategorieën, komen naar voren als antecedenten van boosheid. Zo vallen onbetrouwbaarheid (bijvoorbeeld een aannemer die zijn afspraken niet nakomt), fysieke of communicatieve ontoegankelijkheid (bijvoorbeeld via de telefoon luisteren naar Mozart terwijl je eigenlijk de helpdesk van je internetprovider wilt spreken) en regels en procedures van dienstverleners (een conducteur van de Nederlandse Spoorwegen die mensen uit de eerste klasse wegstuurt op een snikhete dag terwijl de tweede klasse overvol is en reizigers boven op elkaar gepakt staan) onder de hoofdcategorie procedurele gebeurtenissen; gebeurtenissen die betrekking hebben op de levering van diensten. Een tweede hoofdcategorie bevat fouten die betrekking hebben op de interactie tussen een dienstverlener en de klant. Hieronder vallen onbeleefdheid (bijvoorbeeld een huisarts die een patiënt vertelt dat hij niet zo moet zeuren) en niet responsief zijn (een serveerster die een geanimeerd gesprek heeft met de barman terwijl de klant op de rekening zit te wachten). Een derde hoofdcategorie heeft betrekking op hetgeen er geleverd wordt (een verkeerd medicijn dat wordt voorgeschreven, een beschadigde koffer na een vliegreis of een absurd hoge prijs voor twee drankjes in een bar). Tenslotte zijn reacties op klachten (of het ontbreken daarvan, zoals een kelner die weigert zijn excuses aan te bieden) een veel voorkomende bron van boosheid.

Inzicht in de gebeurtenissen die leiden tot boosheid kunnen, zoals gezegd, dienstverleners helpen boosheid te voorkomen. Zo kan bijvoorbeeld een beleid dat tot doel heeft correcte diensten te leveren (een zogenaamde *zero-defects policy*) effectief zijn als het gaat om het reduceren van boosheid. Daarnaast impliceert de bevinding dat consumenten boos worden als werknemers onbeleefd of weinig responsief zijn dat het inhuren van de juiste werknemers en een adequate training en opleiding van werknemers boosheid bij klanten kan voorkomen of verminderen. Toch is het ondanks de beste bedoelingen van de dienstverlener onmogelijk alle incidenten die leiden tot boosheid bij klanten te voorkomen. Dit heeft mede te maken met het feit dat de mens een grote rol speelt bij de productie van diensten: heterogeniteit is daarmee een wezenlijk kenmerk van diensten.

Daarom richt hoofdstuk 2 zich vervolgens op het herstellen van situaties waarin klanten boos zijn. Specifiek is er onderzocht hoe dienstverleners volgens klanten met boosheid moeten omgaan. De resultaten van deze tweede studie suggereren dat het gewenste herstel niet alleen afhankelijk is van het soort fout dat er gemaakt is (het herstellen van procedurele fouten vraagt om andere acties dan het herstellen van interactionele fouten), maar ook van de emotionele staat van de consument. Omdat een gebeurtenis die tot boosheid leidt (in bepaalde mate) de waardigheid van de klant aantast (een serveerster die iemand laat wachten en een arts die onbeleefd is tasten allebei op hun eigen manier de waardigheid van de klant aan), is het voor boze klanten belangrijk dat het evenwicht in de relatie door de dienstverlener wordt hersteld. Elementen die bijdragen aan het herstel van dit evenwicht, zoals bijvoorbeeld een verontschuldiging of het tonen van empathie, worden door klanten dan ook vaak genoemd op de vraag welke acties van dienstverleners gevoelens van boosheid kunnen doen afnemen.

In *hoofdstuk 3* staat de relatie tussen boosheid, ontevredenheid en gedragingen van consumenten centraal. Inzicht in de relaties tussen specifieke emoties en gedragingen van consumenten is belangrijk omdat het dienstverleners kan helpen om gedragingen van consumenten te begrijpen en te verklaren. Op basis van een eerste exploratieve studie, waarin wordt vergeleken hoe de emoties ontevredenheid en boosheid door consumenten worden ervaren, wordt een model gepresenteerd en getoetst waarin de emotie boosheid de relatie tussen transactie-specifieke ontevredenheid en gedragingen van consumenten medieert. De resultaten van een survey-onderzoek ondersteunen het voorgestelde model. Bovendien wordt er geen bewijs gevonden voor twee alternatieve modellen waarin boosheid de relatie tussen ontevredenheid en gedragingen van klanten modereert en waarin transactie-specifieke

ontevredenheid de relatie tussen boosheid en gedragingen medieert. Daarmee wijken de resultaten van dit onderzoek af van eerdere bevindingen in marketing, waarin (transactie-specifieke) ontevredenheid wordt gepositioneerd als de centrale oorzaak van post-consumptie gedragingen van consumenten. De academische en praktische implicaties van deze bevindingen worden besproken in hoofdstuk 3.

Hoofdstuk 4 gaat in op de invloed van verschillende emotie regulatie strategieën op boosheid en gedragsintenties van consumenten: specifiek worden in dit hoofdstuk de effecten van wraakfantasieën, afleiding en klaaggedachten onderzocht. Denken aan (of fantaseren over) wraak is bijna per definitie verbonden aan de emotie boosheid. Interessant is dat de resultaten van eerder, anekdotisch onderzoek suggereren dat wraakfantasieën een positief effect hebben op boosheid; dat wil zeggen dat fantaseren over wraak zou leiden tot een afname van gevoelens van boosheid. Een mogelijke verklaring voor deze bevindingen is dat fantaseren over wraak een substituut is voor daadwerkelijke wraakacties en dat het mensen helpt de negatieve gebeurtenis een plaats te geven en af te sluiten. De resultaten van twee experimentele studies die worden gerapporteerd in hoofdstuk 4 spreken deze eerdere bevindingen echter tegen. De studies tonen aan dat denken aan wraak niet alleen tot meer boosheid leidt, maar ook tot een toegenomen intentie van dienstverlener te veranderen of vrienden en kennissen af te raden gebruik te maken van de diensten van een dienstverlener. De resultaten van hoofdstuk 4 suggereren dat zowel dienstverleners als consumenten meer baat hebben bij afleiding; gevoelens van boosheid nemen in dat geval (op korte termijn) niet toe. Een probleem bij het toepassen van deze emotie regulatie strategie is echter dat het voor veel boze klanten moeilijk kan zijn om 'boze' gedachten te vermijden: mensen hebben vaak het gevoel dat ze het recht hebben om boos te zijn. Om die reden zou afleiding op korte termijn kunnen helpen, maar op lange termijn minder effectief kunnen zijn; wraakgedachten zouden immers na verloop van tijd terug kunnen keren. Daarom lijken dienstverleners en consumenten het meest te profiteren van een scenario waarin klanten overwegen te klagen. Ook in dat geval neemt de boosheid van klanten niet toe, terwijl de intentie te klagen toeneemt en de intentie om vrienden en kennissen af te raden diensten aan te schaffen bij de dienstverlener afneemt. Omdat klachten dienstverleners in staat stellen gemaakte fouten te herstellen en gevoelens van boosheid weg te nemen zijn dienstverleners gebaat bij klachten. Daarnaast heeft een verminderde neiging om negatieve informatie over de dienstverlener te verspreiden een indirect positief effect op de winstgevendheid van dienstverleners. Meer

onderzoek is nodig naar de lange-termijn effecten van verschillende emotie regulatie strategieën en naar situationele en persoonlijke factoren die emotie regulatie strategieën stimuleren of afremmen.

Onderzoek naar boosheid in een dienstverleningscontext is beperkt in omvang. Dit proefschrift toont aan dat boosheid een sterke negatieve invloed kan hebben op de relatie tussen de consument en de dienstverlener en daarmee op de uiteindelijke winstgevendheid en continuïteit van dienstverleners. Verder onderzoek naar de gevolgen van de verschillende manieren waarop klanten kunnen omgaan met boosheid, het herkennen van boosheid bij klanten en de manier waarop situationele factoren van invloed zijn op percepties van rechtvaardigheid kan dienstverleners helpen de negatieve effecten van boosheid te reduceren of te vermijden.

ROGER BOUGIE graduated in Business Administration at Tilburg University in 1993. He started as a lecturer at the Department of Marketing of that same university in 1998 and has been combining this position with his Ph.D. study since 2000. His main research interests include emotions, customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and consumer behavior.

Anger is a powerful negative emotion, that may inspire vigorous and aggressive impulses and behaviors in response to service failures. This dissertation demonstrates that anger is also a common emotional response to failed service encounters. Hence, customer anger may have a powerful impact on the profitability and performance of service firms. The general objective of this dissertation is to provide an increased understanding of customer anger in services. The different chapters of this dissertation answer important research questions such as: How do specific emotions affect customers' behavioral responses to failed service encounters? What events typically instigate anger in customers? How do different emotion regulation strategies customers may use to deal with anger-provoking events affect their emotions and behavioral intentions? How can service firms adequately deal with customer anger?

ISBN: 9072725891